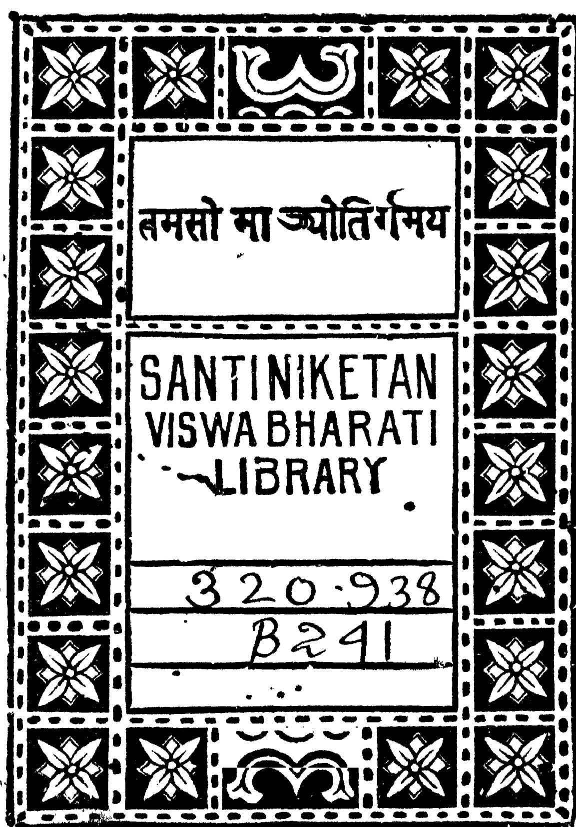


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Greek Political Theory

PLATO AND
HIS PREDECESSORS

Greek Political Theory

PLATO AND HIS PREDECESSORS



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Plato exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic, with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry, melted by the splendour and harmony of his periods into one irresistible stream of musical impressions, which hurry the persuasions onward, as in a breathless career.

He first, and perhaps last, maintained that a State ought to be governed, not by the wealthiest, or the most ambitious, or the most cunning, but by the wisest. SHELLEY

PREFACE

IN 1906 a book—the first book of the writer, with all (and perhaps more than all) the imperfections of a first book—was published under the title of *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle.* Some time before the outbreak of the war the publisher's stock was exhausted; and the writer, alike under his contract with the publisher, who was anxious for a new edition, and under his feeling of obligation to students of the subject, felt himself bound to take in hand the preparation of a new recension of the work.

It was his original intention simply to correct the errors and prune away the redundancies—which were many—of the original edition. But a great deal of work had been done since 1906, which touched the subject he had originally sought to cover: his own ideas had matured; and after a time he came to the conclusion that it was better to rewrite the original work, using fully the new material and his own maturer judgment, and planning the whole on a juster and more proportionate scale. He determined accordingly to write a history of *Greek Political Theory* in two volumes, of which the first and longer volume should be devoted to *Plato and his Predecessors,* and the second and shorter to *Aristotle and his Successors.* The first of these volumes is here printed: the second the writer hopes to finish as soon as the position of national affairs justifies him in undertaking such work. For the present other duties have a prior claim.

The first chapter of the volume is the introduction of the original edition, with some modifications. The second is entirely new. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters correspond, to some extent, to the first chapter of the original work; but there is little left which the reader of the older form will recognise. The sixth and seventh chapters represent a complete revision of the substance of the second chapter of the earlier work. The eighth to the eleventh chapters correspond to the third chapter of the old form; but the eleventh chapter is entirely, and much of the rest very largely, new.

The rest of the work, while it corresponds to the fourth chapter of the first edition, is entirely rewritten; and hardly more than a few paragraphs of the older form survive. The appendix contains a revision and amplification of the substance of the first appendix of the old work.

The writer is perhaps justified in stating that it is an entirely new work which is here printed. The justification is to some extent also a condemnation. It is not usual, and it is perhaps not proper, to "treat a poor book so". *Litera scripta manet*; and a writer ought to treat even himself with some reverence, if only for the sake of the possessors of his original work. These, however, are days of reconstruction; and it seemed best, on the whole, to reconstruct fearlessly, and to think of the new generation which, in other and happier days, might do the writer the honour of reading his book.

The writing of the book has been pure pleasure—pleasure which the writer has often doubted whether he had the right to enjoy. The reader will notice signs of the times in which the book has been written; but it is hoped that they are not obtrusive. Plato has come to mean more for the writer, on many points, than he would have meant if the war had not stirred the deeps. On many issues—the issue of might against right (pp. 71-4); the meaning of militarism (pp. 298-301); the character of international relations (pp. 265-8); and the scope of a true national education (c. xvii.)—it was impossible not to feel that a new feeling for an old message came from the circumstances and environment of the times. But the writer ventures to hope that his critics will not be led by this confession to think that he has not sought to understand Plato *sub specie æternitatis* (or, at any rate, *sub specie temporum suorum*) and to explain Platonic philosophy, as faithfully and as sympathetically as he could, in itself and according to the pure Idea.

The features in the work which the writer would commend to the notice of his readers are the attempt, in the second chapter, to illustrate the characteristics of the Greek State: the passage, in chapter iv., dealing with the newly discovered fragments of the Sophist Antiphon; and the chapters devoted to the *Laws*. These last chapters will have done their work if they succeed in interesting some English readers in the most neglected, and yet in many ways the most wonderful—and the most modern (or mediæval)—of all the writings of Plato. If they should stimulate any scholar to publish, what is

sadly needed, an edition of the *Laws* on the scale of Newman's great edition of the *Politics*, the writer will feel himself richly rewarded.

Of all the debts which the writer owes to Greek scholars none is more profound than that to Professor Burnet, whose massive erudition and sane judgment have in many passages been his guide. Other debts he has sought to acknowledge in their place; but there is one debt, which is a debt of affection, which he would like to acknowledge here. Mr. Sidney Ball, of St. John's College, has generously read the proofs: he has, in many sessions, discussed difficulties with the writer; and while he is responsible for nothing which is amiss, he is responsible for much which is not amiss. Words cannot repay the debt—which is not the only debt owed to him by the writer.

The Warden of All Souls College has been good enough to read, and to castigate, the first part of chapter XVI. The writer would have felt far greater trepidation in "rushing in" upon the domain of law, if the Warden had not taken him by the hand and introduced him to some of its mysteries.

The writer must also, in his capacity of a college tutor, offer his warmest thanks to his pupil, Mr. A. S. Gregson, scholar of New College, for his kindness in helping to revise the final proofs.

Plato himself will say the only thing that remains to be said. *Θεῷ προσεύχομαι, τῶν ῥηθέντων ὅσα μὲν ἐῤῥήθη· μετρίως, σωτηρίαν ἡμῖν αὐτὸν αὐτῶν διδόναι, παρὰ μέλος δὲ εἴ τι περὶ αὐτῶν ἄκοντες εἴπομεν, δίκην τὴν πρέπουσαν ἐπιτιθέναι· δίκη δὲ ὀρθὴ τὸν πλημμελοῦντα ἐμμελῆ ποιεῖν* (*Critias*, 106 B-C).

ERNEST BARKER

OXFORD, *December* 31, 1917.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Greek Political Theory

PLATO AND
HIS PREDECESSORS

GREEK POLITICAL THEORY

PLATO AND HIS PREDECESSORS

CHAPTER I

THE GREEK THEORY OF THE STATE

POLITICAL thought begins with the Greeks. Its origin is connected with the calm and clear rationalism of the Greek mind. Instead of projecting themselves into the sphere of religion, like the peoples of India and Judea, instead of taking this world on trust and seeing it by faith, the Greeks took their stand in the realm of thought, and daring to wonder[1] about things visible, they attempted to conceive of the universe in the light of reason. It is a natural instinct to acquiesce in the order of things presented in experience. It is easy to accept the physical world, and the world of man's institutions, as alike inevitable, and to raise no question about the significance either of man's relations to nature, or of the relations of the individual to institutions like the family or State. If any such questionings arise, they can readily be stifled by the answer out of the whirlwind: "Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty?" But such acquiescence, natural in all ages to the religious mind, was impossible to the Greek. He had not the faith which could content itself with the simple reference of all things to God. Whatever the reason (whether it was due to the disturbing effect of early migrations,[2] or to a civic organisation in many commonwealths, preventing the rise of one universal and majestic Church), the fact is indisputable,

[1] It is a famous saying of Plato that philosophy is the child of wonder. It was the gift of the Greeks that they were prone to wonder; and they naturally turned to inquire into the things which excited their wonder. They inquired rationally into the properties of speech, and so they produced the science of logic: they inquired rationally into the spatial properties of matter, and so they produced Euclidean geometry—perhaps the most typical expression of their genius. In the same spirit they inquired rationally into the composition and properties of the State. There is no speech of 'divine right' or supernatural sanctions in Greek political theory, except, perhaps, in some of the speculations of the later Pythagoreans.

[2] This effect must have been especially marked among the Ionians who migrated from Greece to found new cities in Asia Minor. "Faith had lost its natural foundations: its objects, the Gods, had become only the more fitted for the play of imagination; but men's hearts desired something essentially new. At this price . . . the Ionians bought not only science, but also . . . the Epos" (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Staat und Gesellschaft der Griechen*, p. 28).

that the religious motive appealed little to the Greek. Nor had he, therefore, that sense of the littleness of human thought and endeavour, which might induce him to regard himself as a speck in the infinite. On the contrary, he attemped to conceive of himself as something apart and self-subsistent: he ventured to detach himself from his experience, and to set himself over against it in judgment. It may seem a little thing, and yet it is much, that this abstraction and antithesis should be made. It is the precedent condition of all political thought, that the antithesis of the individual and the State should be realised, as it is the task of every political thinker to reconcile and abolish the antithesis whose force he has realised. Without the realisation of this antithesis none of the problems of political science—problems touching the basis of the State's authority and the source of its laws—can have any meaning: without its reconciliation none of these problems can have their solution. It is in this way that the Sophists, who seized and enforced the antithesis, are the precursors and conditions of Plato and Aristotle, by whom it is abolished.

A sense of the value of the individual was thus the primary condition of the development of political thought in Greece. That sense had its manifestation as much in practice as in theory; and it issued into action in the shape of a practical conception of free citizenship of a self-governing community—a conception which forms the essence of the Greek city-state. Whatever may be said of the 'sacrifice' of the individual to the State in Greek politics or in Greek theory, the fact remains that in Greece, as contrasted with the rest of the ancient world, man was less sacrificed to the whole to which he belonged than he was elsewhere. The Greeks were never tired of telling themselves that while in their communities each man counted for what he was worth, and exercised his share of influence in the common life, in the despotisms of the East nothing counted but the despot, nor was there any common interest at all. The States of Greece cohered by law, and not by the personal tie of a common subjection to the capricious will of a single individual; they were fellowships or associations (κοινωνίαι) in a common substance of social opinion and social ethics, and not mere unions of masters and slaves devoid of a common interest. In States such as these, where men 'like,' if not always 'equal,' and pursuing a like object in common, were knit together in partnership, political thought found a natural soil. Here were individuals distinct from the State, and yet in their communion forming the State. What was the nature of the distinction, and what was the character of the communion? Was there any opposition between the natural instincts of the individual and the constant claims of the State? Did the individual naturally regard as just something other than that which the State constantly enforced as such? If there was such a discrepancy, how had it arisen, and how had a community come to be formed which enforced a conception of justice different from that of the

natural man? Such were the questions which, it seems, would naturally arise (and actually arose in Athens during the fifth century) as a result of the peculiar character of political life in Greece. The detachment of the individual from the State, which is theoretically a necessary condition of political science, had already been attained in practice in the life of the πόλις; and the Greek citizen, thoroughly as he was identified with his city, was yet sufficiently independent, and so far a separate moment in the action of the community, that he could think himself over against it, and so come by a philosophy of its value. In other words, the Greek city depended upon a principle, unrealised but implicit, of rational coherence; and just because that principle was already implicitly there, it was the more easy for conscious reason to apply itself to the solution of the problem of political association.

In yet other ways did the existence of the city-state afford a basis for political thought. Unlike the States of the Oriental world, it was not stationary: it possessed a principle of growth, and had known a cycle of changes. Sparta was the one State of the Greek world which had maintained a steady tradition of unbroken continuity in its government: in other cities there had been a development which had almost everywhere followed the same order, from monarchy to aristocracy, from aristocracy to tyranny, from tyranny to democracy. These changes must have conduced in two ways to the growth of political thought. In the first place, they accumulated a number of data for inquiry. Instead of any single type of constitution, history presented a succession; and while speculation may be silent before a single type, a succession of types inevitably suggests comparison and discussion.[1] But it may be suggested that the last of these types fostered the growth of political thought still more directly. Aristocracy had not given way to democracy without a struggle; and democracy had still to maintain itself against the claims of wealth and nobility. The nobles had lost their position of legal privilege, but they still retained the social privileges of birth and wealth. The economic development of Greece, which added to their wealth, added also to their prestige; the loss of legal rights was more than outweighed by the growth of social influence; and the Many, whatever their legal equality, had still to contend with the practical superiority which wealth, and birth, and culture gave to the Few. On the ground of theory, as well as in actual life, this struggle made itself felt. The Few found it easy to talk of the rights of property and of birth: the Many had to discover a philosophic answer. Metaphysics would not be necessary, it has been said, if it were not for the

[1] The problem of a classification of constitutions, which inevitably involves comparison, already occupies the attention of Herodotus (III. c. 80-82), and is henceforth a staple of Greek inquiry.

existence of bad metaphysics. Similarly, it may be suggested, political theory owed its existence in Greece to the need of correcting a theory already in vogue, and political thought began as soon as the Many attempted to answer by argument the claims of aristocratic prestige. From the beginning of the sixth century to the close of the fourth--from Solon and Theognis to Plato and Aristotle—the weighing of the claims of the wise and virtuous Few against those of the Many is a constant staple of Greek speculation. In a word, the struggle of the Few and the Many gave an impulse to the development of political theory in Greece in much the same way as popular revolts against monarchy have in modern times produced, or at any rate stimulated, political theories like that of the Social Contract. Finally, we have to remember that democracy, in itself, is government by discussion. It is government "by the word"; and all things are thrown for settlement into an arena in which "one shrewd thought devours another". From the constant discussions of political detail the citizens of a Greek democracy naturally rose to the discussion of political principles, as the democratic soldiery of Cromwell's army rose from discussing questions of pay and the details of the hour to discussion of the 'fundamentals' of political society. Democracy cannot exist on inherited and unexplained tradition. It lives in the free air of nimble thought, and the discussion of principles is as vital to its life as the discussion of policies. No reader of Thucydides can fail to be struck by the conscious grasp of principle which democratic speakers are made to show in his pages, whether it be Athenagoras at Syracuse, or Cleon at Athens, or the Athenian envoys at Melos.

But not only did the city-state offer a number of historical data for comparison and discussion. By its very nature the city-state was not one but many; and in Greece there were at any given time a number of different States, not only co-existent, but also in intimate contact. Men were forced to ask themselves questions about the real meaning of the State, when they saw so many different interpretations current. They were driven to ask themselves what a citizen really was, when Athens, Thebes, and Sparta imposed qualifications so various. Particularly would a question arise, which would almost seem to have had a peculiar charm for the Greek—What is the best State? which of existing forms is nearest to perfection, and by what degrees do other States successively recede from it? Just because the real was so manifold, the need of the conception of an ideal was vividly felt: the ideal State would serve as a standard, by which existing States might be classified and understood. And this search for the ideal was the more natural, as these different States exhibited not merely 'constitutional' differences, in the modern sense of that word, but deeper and more fundamental differences of moral aim and

character.[1] The very size of the city-state, and the consequent intimacy of its life, encouraged the rise of a local opinion of decency and propriety. Each of these small cities had its "tone" (ἦθος): each had evolved in the course of its history a code of conduct peculiar to itself.[2] Such a code found its sanction in the force of public opinion by which it had been created. Concentrated and intense, that opinion bore upon each individual with a weight which we can hardly imagine: where each knew his neighbour (and this is one of the conditions which Aristotle postulates for a proper city), and each was concerned about his neighbour's behaviour, it would be hard for any man to go against the tone and habit of his city's life. The city formed a moral being, with a set character of its own; and its members, as the funeral speech of Pericles shows, were conscious of the individuality of their city, and could contrast its character with that of others.[3] A political consciousness had thus developed in the Greek States. Each was aware of itself as a rounded whole, possessed of a moral life created and sustained by itself; and it expressed this sense in the conception of the "self-sufficingness" or *αὐτάρκεια* of each political unit. Because it was self-sufficing, each State claimed to be self-governing: *αὐτονομία* flowed inevitably from *αὐτάρκεια*. "Home-Rule and Self-Sufficiency are, in the traditional Greek view, almost convertible terms." No wonder, then, that men began to discuss the value of each of these distinct types, or that the political consciousness of a separate individuality issued in political reflection.

It would thus appear that the political conditions of the city-state tended to produce a growth of political thought, first, because the city was a self-governing community whose relation to its members demanded investigation; secondly, because the city had gone through a process of growth which at once supplied the data, and, in its last stage, administered an impulse to thought; lastly, because the co-existence of different types of cities, each conscious of its own identity, suggested a comparison of types and the search for an ideal.

[1] To Aristotle these differences would be constitutional, since the constitution represents the moral aim of the State, and is a manner of life (*βίος τις*).

[2] The uniqueness of each State was also shown in material things. Each πόλις has "her own tricks for shaping and colouring pots, her own peculiarities of dress and shoes, her own traditional dishes and drinks, her own 'school' of arts and crafts, just as she has her own dialect and way of writing it, and her own gods and constitution" (Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 219).

[3] "Our government is not copied from those of our neighbours. . . . Our military training, too, is different from that of our opponents. . . . So, too, with education. . . . We differ from other states in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life not as 'quiet.' but as useless; we decide or debate, carefully and in person, all questions of policy. . . . We are noted for being at once most adventurous in action and most reflective beforehand. . . . In doing good, too, we are the exact opposite of the rest of mankind. We secure our friends not by accepting favours but by doing them. . . . No other city of the present day goes out to her ordeal greater than ever men dreamed" (Thucydides, II. 37. The translation is that of Zimmern, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-200).

But the political thought which deals with the city-state is inevitably coloured by the peculiar conditions of its subject. The πόλις was an ethical society; and political science, as the science of such society, became in the hands of the Greeks particularly and predominantly ethical. The constitution is to Aristotle the State; and the constitution is not only "an arrangement of offices," but also "a manner of life". It is more than a legal structure: it is also a moral spirit. This is indeed its inward essence and its vital meaning. In treating of the State, therefore, a thinker must approach his subject from an ethical point of view. He must speak of political science in terms not of jurisprudence, as a later generation, taught by Rome, attempted to do, but of moral philosophy.[1] He must ask—What is the aim which a State ought to pursue, and what are the methods which it should use, in order to lead the right "manner of life" and attain the true moral spirit? He must not ask whether political power should be concentrated or divided; he must not inquire into legal rights or the distribution of taxes: he must remember that he is concerned with a moral rather than a legal community, and he must discuss the various aspects of the moral life of such a community. Political science must be for him the ethics of a whole society, which coheres in virtue of a common moral purpose: it must determine the 'good' of such a society, the structure by which its 'good' will best be realised, the action by which it will best be secured. Between political science thus conceived and ethics there is for Aristotle no essential difference. The good of the individual is ideally the same as the good of the society; his virtue is ideally the same as that of his State. Political science, as the science of a whole moral society pursuing the full good which can only be realised by common action, is for Aristotle the supreme ethics. It is the science of the whole duty of man—of man in his environment and the fulness of his actions and relations. Aristotle has no word for or conception of ethics as a separate science. If he writes a treatise on ethics distinct from his treatise on politics, this does not mean that he is distinguishing a science of politics: it only means that he is differentiating virtue as a static and psychological condition in the individual from virtue as the dynamic energy of man in society.[2] And thus to Aristotle there is a unity of political science with moral philosophy—and of both (it may be added) with jurisprudence; for the ethical code of the State is the same as law or right, nor is there any distinction between the theory of civil and that of moral law. Political science is a trilogy. It is the theory of the State; but it is also a theory of morals and a theory of law. It contains two subjects, which have since been removed from its scope and treated as separate spheres.

[1] Political science, it may be said, has always had to borrow its vocabulary from other studies—ethics, jurisprudence, or biology. Greek political science always spoke in terms of ethics.

[2] At the same time it must be admitted that Books IV-VI of the *Politics* contain a realistic treatment of politics, divorced from ethics.

From this conception of political science there flow certain differences between Greek political thought and our modern ways of thinking. The conception of the State as an ethical association for the attainment of virtue involves a conception of the relations of the State to the individual different from most which are current to-day. Although, as has been said, the Greek thought of himself as one who counted for what he was worth in his community—although he regarded himself as a moment in determining its action—the fact remains that in the political thought of Greece the notion of the individual is not prominent, and the conception of rights seems hardly to have been attained. It was, perhaps, precisely because the individual felt himself an influence in the life of the whole, that he did not endeavour to assert any rights against the whole. Secure in his social value, he need not trouble about his individual 'person'. And hence, starting from an ethical point of view, and from the conception of the State as a moral association, Greek thought always postulated a solidarity which is foreign to most modern thinking. The individual and the State were so much one in their moral purpose, that the State was expected and was able to exercise an amount of influence which seems to us strange. Both by Plato and by Aristotle the positive furtherance of goodness is regarded as the mission of the State. They start from the whole, and look for the means by which its life and purpose may be impressed upon the individual. To the modern thinker the mission of the State is negative: its function is the removal of hindrances (rather than the application of a stimulus) to the moral life. We start from the individual: we regard him as possessed of rights (only too often of 'natural' rights independent of social recognition), and we expect the State to guarantee those rights and, by so doing, to secure the conditions of a spontaneous growth of character. We are anxious that the action of the State should not introduce too much automatism into the life of its members. Our motto is—Better the half of a good act done from within, than the whole enforced from without. The Greeks had little of this anxiety. They had little if any conception of the sanctity of rights. Plato indeed seems ready to abolish the most vital of them all, though Aristotle, here as elsewhere, is more conservative, and vindicates a right (just as in slavery he vindicates a wrong), if it can plead a prescriptive title.[1] Accordingly the mark of Greek political thought is rather a desire for the action of the State, and an attempt to sketch the lines of its action, than any definition or limitation of the scope of its 'interference'.

It could hardly be otherwise with a theory which was the theory

[1] That Plato, and still more Aristotle, had some conception of "rights," is by no means denied. Such a conception, as we shall see, was involved in their teleological view of the world.

of a city-state. The city-state, it must always be remembered, knew no distinction between State and Church. Greek religion, except for the Mysteries, was a matter of "external public worship". There was no separate priesthood in Greece as there was at Rome. The worship of Delphic Apollo was indeed widespread, and in the early years of the sixth century it was influential in encouraging a certain tone of life, and in propagating the characteristic Greek notion of "nothing in excess"; but Delphic Apollo had only his priests at Delphi, and no organised church gathered round his cult elsewhere. Each city had a cult, or a number of cults, of its own; and the gist of each cult was outward ceremony. Greek religion in general was no spiritual influence directing an inward life: it was a matter of oblation and sacrifice. Each citizen owed to his city (one may almost say he owed to the city rather than to the gods) the piety (εὐσέβεια) which consisted in the due discharge of ceremonial rites; and impiety was simply the sin of omitting that discharge. A citizen might worship other gods than those received by the State: what he might not do was to omit to worship those whom it had received. In a word, external ritual, and the local character of that ritual, were the marks of the religious life of Greece. Each community cared for its own local ritual as much, and in much the same way, as it cared for its public affairs. Religion was an aspect of the political life of a political society: it was not another life, and it entailed no other society. The sphere of the Greek city was not limited by the existence of an association claiming to be its equal or superior. It could not leave to such an association the preaching of morality and the finding of sanctions for its truths: being itself both Church and State, it had both to repress original sin—a function to which mediæval theory restricted the State, and to show the way to righteousness—a duty which mediæval theory vindicated for the Church.

The theory of the city-state is therefore a theory which admits readily the full action of the State, and inquires particularly into the proper methods of its exercise. It is a theory of, and for, the legislator. The Greeks believed that the different tones and tempers of their States were due to the action of sages like Lycurgus or Solon, who had cast the moulds in which the lives of their fellows were ever afterwards shaped. Much of their belief is probably unhistorical. The story of the legislation of Lycurgus is perhaps an invention of the fourth century. Spartan law is a stern usage and tradition of the elders; and "such a law, which, like religion, is only written in the hearts of men, was made by no single person, but grew during the lives of generations".[1] Elsewhere, however,

[1] Some of the critics of the original form of this book objected to a suggestion there made, that the Greek conception of the legislator owed something to "a natural and universal instinct to refer what has been the slow process of a people's mind to the

men were made of more pliant stuff, and the mobile temper of the Greeks sometimes lent itself readily, though perhaps not permanently, to the plastic activity of an ordering intelligence. Solon left his mark on Athens; and in some respects the work of Cleisthenes is still more striking than that of Solon. Of him, at any rate, the saying is true, that "their legislators work like architects by rule and compass". He treated the problems of Attic life as it were on the metric system, and allotting ten tribes to the people, and ten months to the year, he gave them a solution mathematically definite.[1] What is true of Athens is also true of many of the Greek colonies. Colonies were new grounds and fields for the experiments the Greeks loved to make; and when, as was often the case, a colony was composed of settlers of different stocks, some eirenicon had necessarily to be issued. It is little wonder therefore that the figure of the legislator seems to occupy the minds of political thinkers. They regard themselves as imaginary law-givers, drawing, as the first-born of their thought, the full plan of what should be, and sketching next the proper lines on which, if the ideal should prove unattainable, the given and actual may be rebuilt. If an actual legislator had thus made the past, why should not a philosopher make the present, moulding matter according to his will, as the legislator had done before? There is always this practical bent in Greek political thought. The treatises in which it issues are meant, like Machiavelli's *Prince*, as manuals for the statesman. Particularly is this the case with Plato. True to the mind of his master Socrates, he ever made it the aim of his knowledge that it should issue in action; and he even attempted to translate his philosophy into action himself, and to induce a tyrant to realise the

fiat of the greatest of its sons". Students of English history are familiar with the alchemy of legend, which has made Alfred the universal parent of English institutions like shire and jury. But I was wrong in minimising the importance of the νομοθέτης in Greek history, and I have altered the text. On the other hand, the passage quoted above (from Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 80) lends some countenance to what I said; and I still incline to believe of the Greeks that "their artistic temper demanded that institutions should appear as the rounded product of a single chisel". I may add that we depend for our knowledge of the legislators on later authorities, in whom the instinct *chercher l'homme* may have been active. The one 'legislator' of modern times, Jeremy Bentham, had little fruit of his labours. "The Emperor, Alexander I, requested Bentham's assistance in reforming the Russian Code. Bentham proffered assistance in a similar undertaking to the King of Bavaria. At a later date he addressed a denunciation of monarchy to the Greek insurgents, and tendered the draft of a constitution to Mehemet Ali. It would be hard to say what was the positive result of this interchange of civilities" (Montague, Preface to Bentham's *Fragment of Government*, p. 11).

[1] Wilamowitz suspects Pythagorean influence, *cf. infra*, p. 46. But it is to be noticed that the early German tribes were almost equally mathematical. The German *pagus* was a unit of 1000 men: the *centena* a subdivision of 100. The "Tribal Hidage" of Anglo-Saxon times shows the same mathematical trend; and the early tables of weregilds are like exercises in arithmetic. One need not go to Pythagoras, or to "the Greek liking for order and symmetry," to explain an instinct for neat round numbers, which is natural in a certain stage of political development—and probably, by the way, only fitted actual life very loosely, like an ill-made coat.

hopes of the *Republic*. Nor shall we do justice to Aristotle unless we remember that the *Politics* also is meant to guide the legislator and statesman, and to help them either to make, or to improve, or at any rate to preserve the States with which they have to deal.

But if this be the case, it may be asked, is not the political science of the Greeks an art, rather than a science? If its aim is to make, or at any rate to produce some alteration in the subject studied, can it be a science, seeing that science seeks merely to know the truth about a given subject of investigation? The answer to this difficulty lies in realising that the sciences which treat of the operation of the human mind, whether in thought or in action, have a double aspect. Primarily, sciences such as logic, ethics, and politics attempt to determine the laws by which the mind acts in their several spheres. They analyse their material in order to determine the general propositions which can be laid down with respect to its nature. But to understand the laws, by which reason has been acting, is not merely to lay down laws in the sense of general propositions: it is also to lay down laws in the sense of regulations. The discovery of the process of reasoning by logic is also an act of legislation for the right methods of reasoning. It is easy to overrate the authority of the law thus promulgated, and to cramp the process of thought under the rules of a formal logic; and where this is done, a reaction is inevitable against the dictatorial aspect of the science of thought. But such an aspect it undoubtedly possesses; and such an aspect is also presented by the sciences of human action. The propositions which are true of the action of man in his political capacity are also rules for his action, because the subject of which these propositions are true is the healthy normal subject, just as the propositions of logic are true of normal and 'regular' thought. Accordingly, such propositions as that "the aim of the State is its citizens' well-being," or that "justice means the requital of good for good and evil for evil," can be written in the imperative as well as in the indicative mood. A State *ought* to pursue the well-being of its citizens in the fullest and truest sense of the word: it *ought not* to make wealth, or power, or equality, its aim. A State *ought* to give honour and office to those who have given to it the virtue which furthers its aim: it *ought not* to put in authority the wealthy, merely because they are wealthy, or the poor, merely because they are poor. It is on this dictatorial aspect of science that the political thought of the Greeks chiefly concentrated itself.[1] The Greeks wrote their political science in the imperative mood. But that does

[1] Greek philosophy in general, Professor Burnet writes (*Greek Philosophy*, p. 12), was "an effort to satisfy what we call the religious instinct". It issued in "a way of life," which the philosopher felt bound to communicate "sometimes to a circle of disciples, sometimes to the whole human race". The philosopher sought social influence rather than the life of contemplation or the life of personal virtue.

not mean that they had forgotten the indicative. To be able to know and to expound the truth is the aim of political science to Aristotle, even though he generally expresses himself in the imperative, and though—by dividing science into theoretical and practical, and classifying politics as practical—he emphasises the value of the science of politics as a director of practice.

We have now seen what were the main peculiarities of the political thought which the city-state produced. It was a thought which conceived the State as a moral association, and, as a result, approached its subject from an ethical point of view. It was a thought which was so closely allied with practice that it always conceived itself as pre-eminently a practical study. One feature of Greek politics still presents itself as of vital importance in determining the course of Greek political thought, a feature of the pathology rather than the physiology of the State, but one which, just because political thought was practical and medicinal, had all the greater effects upon the line of its movement. The Greeks, to use Hegel's terminology, never distinguished with sufficient clearness between 'Society' and 'State'—between the complex of economic classes, which by their different contributions form the social whole, but are themselves immersed in individual interests, and the neutral, impartial, and mediating authority of the sovereign, who corrects the individualism of society in the light of the common interest of which he is the incarnate representative. Much depends on keeping the State distinct from society, and preserving the mediatory and corrective authority pure and intact from the influence of the interests which it controls. To secure that distinction, and that integrity, is as much a concern of the modern State as it was of the ancient. There is still the danger that some social class, some economic interest, may infect the purity of the State, and, capturing the powers of the Government, direct them to its private advantage. On the other hand, there is always a danger that the State may harden into a repressive crust, which prevents the free growth of society, as it may be said to have done in the later days of the Roman Empire, when such organs of society as the *municipium* or *collegium* were rigorously regimented and controlled. 'State' may be distinguished from 'Society' in another sense than that of Hegel: instead of conceiving society as a complex of competing economic classes, and the State as a majestic unity which transcends and blends their difference, we may regard society as the area of a varied voluntary co-operation, and the State as an organisation which necessarily acts in the medium of a uniform compulsion.[1] From this point of view it may be argued that the play of society ought to modify the action of government, and that the State ought to respond to new social developments.

[1] Hegel's distinction, it may be said, leads to State Socialism: the other distinction, if it is pressed, leads to Guild Socialism.

In a free political society like that of the Greeks, however, this modification or response came naturally. Society and the State interacted: on the one hand the play of social opinion gave life and vigour to political action: on the other, the possibility of being expressed in political action gave reality to social opinion. In a word, the spirit of democracy was active; and as must always be the case when that spirit is active, free social opinion and social groups could easily influence the life of the State.

The real danger of the Greek world was less that the State should stifle society, than that the State should be corrupted by sinister social interests. Such corruption is the plague of politics. It may attack great modern States, just because their size and immensity make it easy for a 'machine' to use its organisation all the more secretly and effectively. But it was a disease to which the city-state would seem to have been especially exposed. A city where the government has for its subjects acquaintances, whose interests and passions it knows and can at pleasure thwart or forward, can hardly expect a neutral government. Limited in its area, the πόλις could not develop a remote and majestic government, above the play of social motives: it could not specialise a political organ, full of the zeal of its own mission.[1] Society must be one with the State, because there was no room for differentiation. The very theory of "distributive justice" illustrates the point; for this theory presupposes that political power must be awarded, either to each of the social classes, in proportion to their several contribution, or to one, in virtue of its pre-eminent services. Thus, while the political theory of the Greeks realised the conception of a common good as the aim of every political group, it never attained a full conception of the right organ for securing that common good. It was always groping its way to such a conception: the very evils which the want of it produced were a sufficient stimulus. Those evils were very real. If in theory men sought for a just distribution of office among the different classes, in practice they tended to make political authority the prize of the strongest class, and to use the prize, when it had been won, in the interest of the class which had conquered. Hence, at any rate by the fourth century, politics had become a struggle, a στάσις; and political power became an apple of discord, for which the rich vied with the poor. Accordingly, political thought was occupied with the problem of producing a *concordia ordinum*, just as, in the 'pre-Adamite' days of the Mercantile System, political economy was concerned with the problem of discovering a scheme, by which the different factors of production might work harmoniously, and manufacture and agriculture might both be protected, without any detriment resulting to either from the preference shown to the

[1] Much of this criticism of the πόλις must be modified, when it is applied to Sparta as Sparta was in her great epoch.

other. Such a *concordia ordinum* Plato sought to attain in the *Republic* by the creation of a specialised class of governors detached from society by a system of communism—an attempt at once to differentiate 'State' from 'Society' and to discover an organ for the realisation of the common good. The same aim was pursued by Aristotle also, but by different means. In opposition to Plato, who sought to institute a human sovereign, Aristotle turned to the conception of neutral and dispassionate law as the true sovereign of the State. Realising, however, the need of human agency to enforce law, and alive to the truth that laws are what men make them by the manner of their enforcing, he sought in the 'middle class' the mediator and arbitrator between contending factions. If neither extreme rules, but the middle class, which shares in the interest of both, is supreme, then in its supremacy the *concordia ordinum* is established, and the common good has found the organ of its realisation.[1]

So far we have regarded the city-state, and the general conditions of its life, as the material with which political thought was occupied, and to which it adjusted its conclusions. But it should be noticed, in conclusion, that there were two States in particular, which occupied the attention, and helped to determine the theory, of both Plato and Aristotle. The two were Athens and Sparta—pre-eminently and particularly Athens. In Athens Plato and Aristotle spent the best part of their lives; and Athenian conditions were those which they naturally observed. But it was not merely facts like these which made their political philosophy a philosophy of Athens: it was the fact that in Athens there was a highly developed political life, with its appropriate and regular organs, which had attained to full self-consciousness. Whether or no philosophers admired the development, here was a full and perfect specimen of its kind for their study: whether or no they agreed with its theory, here they had a theory to examine. Freedom was here claimed as a birth-right; and by freedom men understood the right of "living as one liked" in social matters, and the sovereignty of the majority in political affairs. Equality was a watchword; and equality meant "Isonomy, or equality of law for all; Isotimy, or equal regard paid to all; and Isagoria, or equal freedom of speech". Culture was not forgotten: Athens prided herself on being a *Kulturstaat*, and opposed the many-sided and versatile play of her interests to the close devotion to war which characterised Sparta. None the less Sparta had a great attraction for the philosopher, because, almost alone of Greek States, she enforced a "training" (ἀγωγή) which preserved the "tone" of her constitution, and because by this means she was able to teach each individual Spartan to

[1] In Aristotle's *ideal* State the method pursued is different. Impartality is to be sought and gained by the enlistment of all the citizens (who, however, are only a select aristocracy) in the work of government. The method described in the text belongs to the sub-ideal State, or 'polity'.

regard himself as a part of the body politic. Here there was a principle carried to its conclusion with what seemed a thorough and remorseless logic; and the philosopher could not but admire the philosophic State. Here the sense of "limit," which meant so much to the Greek, was a living and active thing: if Athens boasted of εὐτραπελία, Sparta could boast of her εὐνομία; while the stability of a constitution which had stood secure for hundreds of years was something to which the versatile Athenian was entirely strange. No wonder therefore that the *Republic* is, to some extent, a 'Laconising' pamphlet—a critique of Athens, and a laudation of Spartan logic, Spartan training, and Spartan subjugation of the individual to the State. Athens had sinned, in Plato's eyes, in the want of training for politics which disfigured her politicians: she had sinned still more because the spirit of self had invaded her politics, and the individual, in his claim for a false freedom and a false equality, had set himself up in arms against the State. Her salvation, and that of Greece, was to be found in following Spartan example, so far at any rate as to train the citizen for his work and to inculcate upon him his duty to the State. But Sparta too had her faults, of which Plato is not unaware, and which Aristotle trenchantly exposes. The principle she had adopted was of the narrowest: she had made success in war the end and aim of her existence. Her training only produced a limited and stunted type of character; and underneath a fair show of ascetic loyalty to the State there lurked not a little self-indulgence. The width of Athenian and the concentration of Spartan character needed to be blended to form the ideal Greek; and the ideal city must reconcile the expression which the individual attained in Athens with the order and the unity which the State enforced in Sparta.

No political philosophy can be detached from its environment in history; and most of the great works of political thinkers, the *Prince* of Machiavelli, the *Leviathan* of Hobbes, the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau, are something in the nature of political pamphlets addressed to the conditions of their times. Plato and Aristotle show this tendency all the more strongly, because they had a conception of political science as a practical and remedial thing. Their philosophy is of the Greek, and for the Greek; nor was it until the city-state was being absorbed in the empire of Macedon that a new type of experience, more analogous to our own, suggested to the Cynics and Stoics a political theory with which a modern mind can more easily sympathise. On the other hand we must not exaggerate unduly the relativity of the political theory of Plato and Aristotle. Their theory was, it is true, intended for the Greek world, and, as we shall see, it exerted a practical influence on the Greek world. But it is also true that in some respects it fell short of the actual facts of that world, and that in others, again, it transcended the limits of Greek experi-

ence. Both Plato and Aristotle conceived of the State as an educational institution, something after the pattern of the philosophic schools in which they taught, and neither did justice to the wider and richer sweep of the political ideal which Athens had sought to pursue in the days of Pericles. Both again (and Aristotle perhaps still more than Plato) failed to comprehend the tendency of the Greek world to a larger unit of politics than the πόλις—a tendency which had been shown in the Athenian Empire, and again in the Bœotian federation; and in this sense both may be said to have failed to transcend the limits of the πόλις. On the other hand Plato at any rate could imagine in the *Republic* an ideal, which goes beyond the limits of his time and even perhaps of all ages; and Aristotle himself, in the more sober and realistic pages of the *Politics*, could depict a development of the citizen's body and mind under the fostering care of the State, which soars beyond the bounds of Greek experience. The political theory of the Greeks, after all, was not altogether conditioned by the experience of their own times. It is made of the stuff of general humanity, and the ideals which it attained will always remain ideals for humanity at large. Nor is it alien to us even in its more peculiar and individual aspects. It is true that political theory varies with the variations of the State. Aristotle's theory of the self-sufficient πόλις differs from Dante's theory of the universal Empire, and Dante's theory of the Empire from Hobbes' theory of the national State. Yet through all its mutations political theory has a fundamental unity. It is always occupied with the same problem—the problem of the relations of man to the State in which he lives. Even if Greek philosophy is a philosophy of the Greek and for the Greek, yet the Greek was a man, and his city was a State; and the theory of the Greek and his πόλις is, in all its essentials, a theory of man and the State — a theory which is always true. The setting may be old-fashioned: the stone itself remains the same. We do not therefore come to the study of the philosophy of the city-state as to a subject of historical interest: we come to the study of something in which we still move and live. The city-state was different from the nation-state of to-day; but it was only different in the sense that it was a more vital and intense form of the same thing. In it the individual might realise himself more easily and clearly as a part of the State, because its size permitted, and its system of primary government encouraged, such realisation. In studying it we are studying the ideal of our modern States: we are studying a thing which is as much of to-day as of yesterday, because it is, in its essentials, for ever.

All history, it has been said, is contemporary history. When we study history, we are trying to understand ourselves, and in order to gain that understanding we are seeking to discover the pit from

which we have been dug and the rock from which we have been hewn. No history matters more to us, and none is more really contemporary, than that of the Greeks. We are what we are, in a very large measure, because they were what they were. In many ways the paradox is true that the history of Athens in the fifth century B.C. is more modern than that of Europe in the eighteenth century A.D. An Englishman feels more affinity with the funeral speech of Pericles than with the memoirs of Frederic the Great. The problems of Greek citizenship touch us to-day because they are ours; and they are ours because the experience of the Greeks has passed into our substance and merged into our being. "They are largely the stuff of which our present selves and our present world are made. Not merely . . . in the sense that then were the foundations of both laid, not merely in the sense that we are heirs to the labours of our ancestors. We *are* the Greeks . . . made what we now are by their thoughts and deeds and experiences, our world their world, at a later stage of an evolution never interrupted, but always one and single."[1]

[1] Professor J. A. Smith (based on Benedetto Croce) in *The Unity of Western Civilization*, p. 72.

Chapter II

THE GREEK STATE

The General Characteristics of the Greek State

IN Greece, as also in Italy, the unit of political life throughout classical times was the city. Men were 'political animals' in the sense that they were members of a πόλις; and though, in the process of time, under the Macedonian and Roman Empires, the πόλις might be enclosed in a larger unit, it was enclosed without being absorbed, and it still remained a centre of loyalty and a system of government, attracting the devotion and inspiring the munificence of its citizens, and continuing its functions (one may almost venture to say) not so much under as side by side with the larger schemes of political life into which it had been drawn. There were, it is true, many parts of Greece in which the city was not indigenous: the Aetolians, for instance, were still, in the days of Aristotle, leading a tribal life in unfortified villages. But civic life was none the less the normal life of the Greek; and aware of that fact he could draw a distinction between his own civilisation, which was that of the city, and the civilisation of the Celts or the Germans who lived in the country-side, and whose civilisation was that of the tribe (ἔθνος).

The distinction between the civic life of Greece and the rural life of Northern Europe in classical times finds its parallel during the Middle Ages in the distinction between the urban life of Italy, still, as it had been in classical times, a country of cities, and the predominantly rural life of England and France and Germany. It is natural, indeed, to compare the towns of mediæval Italy with the cities of classical Greece;[1] and the comparison is one that will recur in these pages. Like the Italian town of the Middle Ages, the Greek

[1] Wilamowitz draws attention to the similarity, *op. cit.*, p. 79. "The tyrants of Italy afford the most striking parallels to those of Greece. Both of these memorable epochs have also their affinities in the fact, that in spite of all feuds, and in spite of the destruction of so many individuals, the general progress, both spiritual and material, is thoroughly vigorous, and all shocks only serve to make life quicker and richer and men of a better courage and greater joyousness. In both epochs the art of building awakes to a glory whose morning freshness must always excite our admiration: in both we can find asceticism and mysticism side by side with a surrender to the lust of the flesh and an egoism pushed to the verge of recklessness."

city is the one unit of life. It is the home of all occupations; it combines the growing of corn and of olives with the making of pottery and leather. It is the home of all classes; it unites the nobility of the land with the craftsman and the retailer. From this fundamental fact flow many of the essential traits of the Greek πόλις. In the first place, even if it is a city, it is redolent of the country. If it is the home of urbanity and of that 'civility' from which we have drawn our word civilisation, it is also the home of *summa rusticitas*. "There is," says a French writer, "a flavour of the barnyard about the comedies of Aristophanes."[1] Immediately outside the walls of Athens lay the orchards of gnarled olives, the vineyards and the sown fields; and within sight of the city rose the sheep-walks on the hills where the shepherds pastured their flocks. For centuries agriculture was the one occupation of the Greeks; nor was it until about the seventh century that trade and industry developed on any scale. Even afterwards the tradition long remained that agriculture was the only proper pursuit of the citizen. "The belief that it is the only foundation of life which is physically and politically sound is common to the Delphic God, to Aristophanes, and to Aristotle."[2] There are many passages of the *Politics* in which Aristotle shows much of the countryman's instinct. When he is discoursing of economics, he lays it down that agriculture is the only natural method of acquisition. He has a certain contempt—a contempt hardly warranted by the facts of Greek life, and partly, perhaps, due to philosophic prepossessions as well as to agrarian prejudice—for the occupations of the retailer and the craftsman. The democracy which finds most favour in his eyes is a democracy of country peasants.[3] When he allots the land of his ideal State among its citizens, he is careful to allot to each citizen two holdings, one near the town, and one in the country.[4] When he is discussing the theory of communism, the one problem to which he addresses himself is whether the *land* of a civic community should be held in common or in severalty.

Aristotle was perhaps preaching, in this respect, a definitely conservative doctrine. By the fifth century Athens at any rate was definitely committed by the paucity of her agricultural produce, and by the growth of her population, to an 'Athenian economy' of selling what she could and buying what she must. From the time of Solon she had encouraged industrial production, in order to gain a margin for exportation; and from the sixth century onwards she had come to depend largely on foreign imports. The city-state was not, as a matter of fact, so economically self-sufficing as Aristotle's theory desired; but it was, on the other hand, what it was all the

[1] Quoted by Ferguson, *Greek Imperialism*, p. 11. The flavour is obvious in the *Acharnians*: it may also be detected in the *Clouds*, lines 1006 *sqq*.

[2] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

[3] Ar., *Pol.*, VI. 4, §§ 8-15 (1319, a 4-b 1).

[4] *Ibid.*, VII. 10, § 11 (1330, a 9-16; but this is borrowed from Plato's *Laws*).

better for being, the home of a varied activity, in which industry and exchange found their place by the side of agriculture. As it was the place where all occupations met on a common ground, so again it was (and this is a second essential trait) the place of a common life and the home of a union of classes. Life within common walls drew men together in a natural intimacy. If it did not abolish the prestige of wealth and birth and culture, it established a tradition of easy intercourse between all classes. There was no physical segregation between the house of the nobleman and the workman's cottage. Climatic conditions made life very largely a matter for the open air. Men met, marketed and talked in the market-place: they took their exercise together in the public gymnasia or athletic grounds;[1] if it rained they walked together in the colonnades or covered walks which were common in most Greek cities. In the market-place, the gymnasia, the colonnades, the city had its brain-centres; and when men met in the assembly for deliberation, they met to settle matters which had been discussed before, and on which an opinion had already been formed, in all these centres. The city was not only a unit of government: it was also a club. It was not only politically self-governed: it had also (what made its self-government possible) a large freedom of social discussion. The home meant much less to the Greeks than it does to us: the open life of the market-square meant much more. In the frequent contact of such a life men of all classes met and talked with one another; and the democratic ideals of equality and of freedom of speech found their natural root. Knots of talkers and circles for discussion formed themselves from day to day; and in public talk and open discussion the business of the community would be a natural staple.[2] Men would come to know one another intimately, and in the common discussion of the market-square and the common exercise of the wrestling-grounds would learn one another's worth. Such a society is the background and basis of the theory of the Greek philosophers. It is of such a society that Aristotle is speaking when he advocates the allocation of offices in the community according to worth; for "mutual acquaintance with one another's characters is necessary to the citizens, both for decision on points of justice and for the proper award of office according to worth". It is of such a society, again, that he is thinking, when he justifies the right of the masses to a share in political power by the consideration "that the masses have a better faculty of judging [than the few]; for some see one aspect, some another, but all together see every side".[3]

[1] The gymnasia at Athens in Aristotle's time were outside the walls (Newman, *Politics*, III. p. 415). More often, as *e.g.* at Sparta, they were in the town; and a gymnasium at Syracuse was in the market-place. Plato and Aristotle both advocate the latter (Newman, *op. cit.*, I. p. 338).

[2] This passage is based on Zimmern, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-61.

[3] Ar., *Pol.*, 1326, b 14-16 (VII. 4, § 13): 1281, b 7-9 (III. 11, § 3).

A last characteristic of the Greek State follows naturally on that which has just been mentioned. The Greek State, in point of extent, was municipal: one may almost say that it was only parochial. It is easy to explain this fact by geographical conditions; but though it is easy, it is not therefore true. Geography may have carved Greece into small enclaves by arms of the sea and ranges of high mountains; but man is made what he is not by geography, but by the spirit. The consciousness of a common nationality would have impelled the Greeks towards a larger State, if it had not been overborne by a still stronger consciousness of the value of the common life they loved and of the need of a civic organisation for the attainment of that life. The city-state was not a geographical datum; it was the necessary spiritual environment of a society that lived on discussion, that found its elixir in talking in common "into the midst" of others, and that felt a necessity upon it to convert discussion and talk into concerted action through joint deliberation and common self-government. The Greeks were well enough aware of their unity. They knew that they had "one blood and one speech, and establishments of Gods and sacrifices in common, and habits of life after the same fashion".[1] They could contrast themselves as a common stock with the barbarians; and Aristotle found in the Hellenic race the golden mean between the races of Northern Europe and those of Asia—"whence it continues free, and is the best governed of any race, and if it found a single government could rule the world".[2] But it is significant that Aristotle speaks of the Greeks in one and the same breath as the best governed of all peoples, and as destitute of a single government. They were the best governed, because they lived in cities; and for the very same reason they were destitute of a single government. They knew the price they paid for their civic commonwealths, and on the whole they paid it cheerfully. They hardly felt the impulse, so strong among modern peoples, towards the achievement of national unity in and through a common national government. There were some, indeed, like Isocrates, who heard the call of Empire, and felt that Greece could not take "its place in the world," or fulfil "its mission in the East," unless some sort of national unity, possibly under some form of monarchy, were first of all established. But they were the exceptions of their times; and Plato and Aristotle, who are philosophers of the πόλις, are also philosophers of the actual politics of Greece. We may call it *Kleinstaaterei*—and such, in point of size, it is; but few States have occupied as large an area of the kingdom of the mind, and few have unfolded so much the dignity of the human spirit, as some of the cities of ancient Greece. We must recognise that there is a reverse side to their achievement. City fell into feud with city; and in spite of, or rather, perhaps, just because of the intensity and

[1] Herodotus, VIII. 144. [2] Ar., *Pol.*, 1327, b 29-33 (VII. 7, § 3).

intimacy of its common life, each city became the prey of civic dissension. The result was collapse in the days when a great State arose in the North under Philip of Macedon. The Greeks knew their weakness; but they clung to their ideal. State and πόλις remained for them convertible terms down to the end of their great period. Their philosophers know no State that is not a πόλις. The tribe (ἔθνος) is not a State, but at most the primitive rudiments of a State; and the aggregation of cities in a federal form is not a State, but a sum in addition badly done. Aristotle never mentions the remarkable federal system which existed in Bœotia from about the middle of the fifth century down to 387, and that though it seems to have formed the model for Philip's reorganisation of Greece at the congress of Corinth in 338;[1] nor does he mention the great territorial State which had arisen in Macedonia in his days, and in which he himself had lived.

It is not blindness. It is prepossession with a higher type, or with what was regarded as a higher type, to the exclusion of all others. And we must remember, if we would understand the development of political theory, that this higher type was so ingrained that it did not disappear when great territorial States and Empires arose. The city was not absorbed by Macedonia or by Rome. It remained as a unit of life and government in their Empires. Alexander and his successors practically recognised a double allegiance in the citizens of the numerous cities under their sway—the civic allegiance due to the city, and the personal allegiance due to themselves. They superimposed on the old civic loyalty a new personal loyalty; and to gain this loyalty they made themselves gods, and claimed as gods the 'adoration' of their cities. The Empire of the Seleucids in Western Asia, for instance, during the third and second centuries, was largely an empire of cities. Each city was something of a State: "its sovereign was not, or not simply, the king: it was the body of its franchised inhabitants assembled in general assembly, and it proceeded to manage its public affairs by means of discussion and resolutions, by delegating functions to a council and magistrates, and by determining its own domestic and foreign policies".[2] The cities spoke Greek: they had Greek codes of law: they had Greek gymnasia. Above them stood the king who was also a god—a god 'manifest,' as Antiochus Epiphanes called himself; and to him, as such, the citizens owed a second allegiance, which would, if his mandates conflicted with their laws, be a superior allegiance. He was not himself a citizen of any city; he stood outside and above them all "like a god among men," as Aristotle says of the παμβασιλεύς, who in some respects seems an anticipation of the deified ruler of later days.[3] But

[1] Ferguson, *Greek Imperialism*, pp. 26-30.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 205. [3] Ar., *Pol.*, 1284, a 10 (III. 12, § 13).

the city remains none the less, and the city is the real and intimate nucleus of life under all the Seleucid kings.

The city still remained, and was equally the nucleus of life, under the Roman Empire, almost till the fourth century of our era. Rome herself was a city-state; and the growth of the Roman Empire took the form of a union of other city-states, first in Italy and then in the provinces, under the ægis of the premier city-state. The civic constitution of Rome proved unequal to the burden; and the Roman Empire had to develop, what the Macedonian Empires had developed, a deified ruler, or *divus Cæsar*, to whom all the cities of the Empire could pay adoration. But the rise of the deified ruler did not hinder—on the contrary, it rather tended to aid—the development of cities in the Empire. The old city-states of Italy and the Greek East still continued to exist; and to these were added a number of others, as kingdoms were dissolved into cities, or as the Celtic tribal units of the West, in Spain and Gaul and Britain, were turned into *civitates* and equipped with civic government.[1] Here again we find two citizenships—one of the local *civitas*, and one of Rome; and here again the central citizenship is not so much citizenship as personal allegiance to a deified ruler. The city becomes the foundation, and the essential unit, of all local administration, alike in the East and in the West.[2] It is true that Rome imposed a uniform civic constitution of an oligarchical type, similar to her own constitution in Republican times, with its mainspring in a senate (or *ordo*) composed of ex-officials.[3] But the local vitality of each city long remained vigorous; and the old characteristics of the city-state long continued to exist in the cities of the Roman Empire. Local feuds were as heated as ever, and everything tended to be drawn into their orbit: Trajan cannot permit the existence of a volunteer fire-brigade in Nicomedia, though a great fire has shown its necessity, because he knows that its organisation will add a new weapon to civic dissensions.[4] The old feuds of city with neighbouring city also recurred; and under Septimius Severus we may find rival cities taking part in a civil war which distracts the Empire in order to fight out their local rivalries under the opposing banners.[5] Finally the old spirit of devotion to the civic commonwealth, and the old instinct of public munificence, still remained to inspire the hearts of the citizens. Rich men spent their means, generation after generation, until they were bankrupt, in providing meals and amusements for the poorer citizens, or in building baths and foundling hospitals for the benefit of their cities. Their motive may often have been a desire for statues or public funerals: their actions showed that the old civic spirit of Athens was not dead, and that the same outlook

[1] Seeck, *Der Untergang der antiken Welt*, II. p. 111.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 164.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 149-55.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

on life which made the rich Athenians furnish a chorus or equip a trireme, and which helped the building of the Acropolis, was still a potent force. The rich still felt, as Aristotle had taught, that if wealth was a "private possession," it must be put to the "common use" and held as a trust for the community; and the poor, feeling that they had a lien on the rich man's wealth, were saved from the communistic outbursts which the misery of the third century A.D. might otherwise have provoked.[1] But from the end of the second century these things had begun to change. The old system of life had depended on two things—on the conception that the city was something of a State, well worth a man's loyalty, and on the belief that office in the city was an honour and not a burden (*honos, non onus*). That conception and that belief began to disappear. Loyalty was diverted to the central government, and men sought to get central office in order to attain its privileges and exemptions. Again the management of civic finances had never been really sound, and public munificence had only contributed to its unsoundness; and when the Emperors, with the best of intentions, tried to set local finances in order, they were forced to interfere with the autonomy of towns, and to deprive their life of its spontaneity. Office became a burden: men fled from cities into the country to escape its incidence.[2] By the fourth century A.D. the city is dying; but until that century the city had never ceased to be a centre and an inspiration of the lives of men.

Such, as far as the briefest of outlines can show, was the πόλις, and such was the part which it played in history for nearly a thousand years, from the seventh century B.C. to the third century A.D. We may now turn from considering what it was to considering what it was not. Errors are easy in dealing with an institution remote from us in time, and different from our own in spirit. It may help towards the correction of errors into which it is easy to fall if we seek to discuss three propositions, or to enunciate three paradoxes. First, the city was not a city, or at any rate not always a city; and it was certainly never a city in our sense of that term. Secondly, the city was not necessarily the home of 'leisure,' nor did the life of its citizens rest on a basis of slavery, nor were they prone to a contempt of labour. Lastly, the city was not devoid of representative institutions, nor unacquainted with the political machinery which is connected with those institutions.

[1] Seeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-8.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 164 *sqq.* Seeck remarks that the rise of Christianity had something to do with the decay of civic life. The sense of political obligation to the community faded: religious alms displaced public munificence. Again the bishop acquired a large position in the city, and displaced the civic officials. But it was mainly the crushing weight of the system of taxation introduced by Diocletian (which fell with particular weight on the cities, and for whose working the civic government was made responsible) that finally dealt the death-blow to the spirit of the πόλις (pp. 188-90).

City-States and Tribal States

"The city was not a city." In the first place, it was not a mass of buildings or an urban area. The 'city' of Athens contained, on a rough estimate, the population of Bristol (the estimates vary between 300,000 and 400,000), and the area of Derbyshire. Half of the population lived in a central town, which was double, and contained a port as well as the inland town itself four miles away; half lived in the country.[1] The whole 'city,' including both town and country, was divided into about a hundred demes; and these, though cunningly distributed in different tribes by Cleisthenes, so that a group of contiguous demes was never joined to constitute a tribe, were individually centres of a vigorous local life, and active organs of the central government. They had their local assembly and their elected officials; they managed the property and the religious ceremonies of their district; and they played a large part in central affairs by keeping a roll of the civic body (for every citizen had to be enrolled as a member of a deme); by raising direct taxes (when they were necessary); and, above all, by proposing lists of candidates from which Athenian jurymen and Athenian councillors were selected by the use of the lot. Athens was indeed in many respects peculiar. Few cities had any local life comparable to that of her demes. Sparta, for instance, was a State with a larger area of territory than Athens. But all the Spartan territory was dominated by the town of Sparta on the Eurotas—a town composed of five villages, which even after their union still preserved something of a separate existence. Only the inhabitants of the town itself had political rights: the rest of the population fell into various degrees of subjection. Some were Perioeci, and managed their local affairs, though they had no voice in the central government: the great mass were Helots, or serfs, who cultivated, in return for part of the produce, the land of their masters in the town. But however unlike Athens in other respects, Sparta was like her in this: she was not, any more than Athens was, a city in the modern sense of the word. They were both States, combining town and country, though they differed greatly in the terms on which they made the combination.

But there is also another sense in which it may be urged that the city was not a city. A city, we must remember, always meant to the

[1] In Greek the word ἄστυ (1) designates the town as opposed to the country (ἀγρός or χώρα): to have town-manners, or to be "urbane," is to be ἀστεῖος; to have country-manners, or to be "boorish," is to be ἄγροικος: (2) it designates the city-buildings as opposed to the civic body (which is πόλις). But ἄστυ is sometimes also used in Attic in a limited sense, to denote (3) the inland city as opposed to the port (Peiræus), or even (4) a part only of the inland city (according to Liddell and Scott the lower city as distinguished from the citadel (ἀκρόπολις), but according to Newman (IV. 514) the citadel as distinguished from the lower city). The term πόλις has various uses. At Athens it was the name often given to the citadel; but it generally meant the State (including both ἄστυ and ἀγρός), not so much however in the sense of a territory, as in the sense of a civic body or community.

Greeks a community of persons rather than an area of territory. They spoke in terms of men where we, with feudal ideas unconsciously present in our minds, tend to speak in terms of acres. The question arises—What was the idea by which these men were grouped, and by which their community in one society was established? Two answers are possible. We may answer that it was contiguity; or we may answer that it was kinship. If we give the first answer, we are entitled to speak of the Greek commonwealth as a city-state (Stadtstaat); if we give the second, we are bound to speak of it, not as a city-state, but as a tribal-state (Stammstaat). One of the greatest of Greek scholars[1] has pressed the second of these views. Rome, he admits, was a city-state, though she only gradually became such; and in Ionia, again, the confusion and dislocation of old groupings in the period of the migrations had loosened and destroyed the blood-bond of the tribe, and replaced it by the local tie of the city. But "Athens and Sparta had only any political importance so long as their constitutions had not the least trace of a city about them". The State, in Athens and Sparta and Greece generally, was a living tribe and a personal order of men, "belonging to one another by birth, and therefore by nature herself, and only able to be parted by doing violence to nature". The tribe or stem seldom attributed its unity to descent from a single common ancestor, but it was none the less a unity and conscious of its unity; and it incorporated its consciousness in a common and special cult of one of the great deities. The stem of the Athenians worshipped Athena, and called itself by her name, "the folk of Athena," just as conversely, in process of time, the representation of the goddess owed many of its traits to the characteristics of her people, so that if she gave her people their name, they gave her back their own character, and made of her their own mirror. Such a society, united by the natural bond of blood, and expressing its union in its cult, has its inner societies of "brotherhoods" (φρατρίαι) and clans (γένη), equally based on blood, and equally natural—just as a tree has its rings; but they have not combined to create the State, any more than the rings have combined to create the tree, and the society of the stem is 'prior' to their societies, as the tree is 'prior' to its rings. The society of the stem may take to living in towns, and it may even, as it did at Athens, organise itself on the lines of radical democracy; it still remains a stem-state. Citizenship depends on birth, and not on residence; in the period of Athenian splendour there is legally no city, and the demes of the city are fused with those of the country in the system of Cleisthenes as divisions of the people of Athena; nor was it until Hellenistic times that the city of Athens came to control the Athenian State. Until that time the city is an economic fact: it is not a political scheme; and the stem remains the basis and the dominating idea of political life.

[1] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-51, 97, 100.

From this conception of the Greek State as a stem several corollaries may be drawn. In the first place, it follows that citizenship goes by descent. Membership of a society based on the principle of blood can only be acquired by birth in that society, though the society may resolve, by general consent expressed in its assembly, to 'adopt' new members. Even Athens, in the radical days of Pericles, enacted by the law of 451 B.C. that only those whose father and mother were Athenian citizens legitimately married could attain Athenian citizenship. When citizenship was thus regarded as membership of a society based on blood and united by a common cult, it was a natural corollary that it could not easily, if at all, be extended. Athens could not give citizenship even to her 'allies' in the Delian league; they were not of the blood; and to make one stem out of many would have been to the religious consciousness of each of the stems of the league an intolerable monotheism. In the second place, it follows from the nature of the stem that the State which is based upon it is essentially a living group of kinsmen. The State is a family circle; and it is divided into smaller family circles, arranging itself by the principle of blood in brotherhoods and clans, and not by the principle of contiguity in quarters and wards. "The family aspect of the Greek city is accentuated by the fact that the town-hall was a town-hearth; that the chief subdivisions of the citizens were brotherhoods, and that all permanent associations of them for public purposes assumed the descent of their several members from common ancestors, who were naturally gods or demi-gods."[1] The living society thus articulated was naturally and necessarily sovereign of itself; the autonomy of the Greek commonwealth is the essential and inevitable outcome of the nature of the kin-group. A society based on contiguity may have grades: a society based on kinship must recognise the legal rights of all who are of the kin. The Romans, who followed the principle of contiguity, spoke of the 'State' and *imperium*; the Greeks, who followed the principle of kin, spoke of *κοινωνία* and autonomy. As in politics, so in religion. Since the society is united in a common cult, all its members share alike in the control of that cult. "In its relations to its gods the Greek State still observes the principle, that the sovereign is the people and the society of free men, who by nature, or practically by nature, are a unity."[2] Lastly, to put the converse side, a society of this order, so entirely free and self-governed, expects and receives the last measure of devotion from its members. "She is ours and we are hers": such is their attitude to the State. United by blood with his society, bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh, the individual does not think of a separate individual life or of separate individual rights. "We must not think that any one of the citizens belongs to himself, but that they all belong to the State."[3]

[1] Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 14 (following Wilamowitz).
[2] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 53. [3] Ar., *Pol.*, 1337, a 28-9 (VIII. I. § 4).

The tone of the funeral speech of Pericles echoes the old idea: "Athenians," such is his gist, "are made for the city, not the city for Athenians".[1] And the idea persists in Greek political thought. While modern thought starts from the rights of the individual, and conceives the State as existing to secure the conditions of his development, Greek thought starts from the right of the State to a self-governing and self-sufficing existence, and conceives the individual as existing to further that existence. "He who showed the obedience of a child to his country, even unto death, is Socrates, the freest of all mortal men, who obeyed nothing but his reason."[2]

The view that the Greek State was not a city-state, but a tribal state, cannot, however, be accepted without large modifications. It is true that the State in Greece, as elsewhere, begins as an association united by the tie of blood. The original stem (ἔθνος) constituted a religious and legal unit, with its own cult and its own custom; and it was in societies of this order that the Greeks were divided when they entered into Greece. But as soon as such societies settled in permanent dwellings, the principle of contiguity began to modify the principle of blood, and become gradually dominant over a large area.[3] First of all villages arose, with a fortified place or 'burh' on high ground near running water (an ἀκρόπολις or, as it is often called in early times, a πόλις), not, indeed, intended for habitation, and not even perhaps as an asylum to which the villagers could fly with their cattle when threatened, but rather perhaps as a stronghold to prevent any permanent occupation of their territory. In these fortified places we may detect the germ of the city; and we may recognise with Aristotle that it begins "for the sake of life". But there were further developments which preceded the rise of the city. Villages formed themselves into groups or 'systems,' such as the tetrapolis of Marathon, or the Four Villages (τετρακωμία) round the Peiræus; and local units became practically sovereign in their spheres, while the old groups based on blood became merely religious associations, and retained only the common cult. Finally, about the seventh century, cities proper came into existence. The early settlers in Greece, like the early Germans, had shunned the towns of an earlier civilisation, and contented themselves with village forts. But as the needs of life created the fort, so the needs of "good life" in time produced the city. It was found more convenient and more efficient to come and live permanently under one ἀκρόπολις, instead of using several for protection in times of need; and still more, perhaps, it was found that better and more impartial justice could be secured if men gathered themselves in larger communities with regular organs of

[1] Zimmern, *op. cit.*, p. 70. [2] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[3] Hermann-Swoboda, *Lehrbuch der Griechischen Staatsaltertümer*, III, i, (6th ed., 1913), pp. 4 *sqq.*

government.[1] An open city (ἄστυ) arose at the foot of the fort; and when the two were united in a common ring-wall (though sometimes, as at Athens, this was not done till later days) the city (πόλις) definitely emerged. The union of adjacent villages to the city by way of synœcism is a later development, and the terms on which that union was effected might, as we have seen, vary in different States.[2] But the general result of the formation of cities was the dependence of the country on the city, and the institution of a definitely civic life in which the old blood-bond of the stem gradually disappeared. Relics of the old days, it is true, persist: we may even see how, when Cleisthenes creates his demes, each deme takes to itself the cult of a hero founder, and (still more strange) membership of a local deme is made hereditary, so that a man who removes to a new deme still belongs, with his children after him, to the deme of his forefathers. Here the old ideas are imitated in a new institution; but it remains true that with the city the principle of contiguity triumphs, and men live in the bonds of neighbourliness rather than the bonds of blood. The city-state, after all, *is* a city-state. The life of the Athenians hinged on Athens; and in the Peloponnesean war Pericles could surrender the country to the invader, while he gathered the Athenians in the intimate home of their life. But the tribe played its part in Greek history nevertheless. We must admit that it was the one unit of early Greece. The Greek State first appears in history as a tribe. The Greek city, after all, had a long history behind it, and there are elements in that history which Aristotle, who does not go beyond the village and the city, fails to reproduce in the *Politics*. We must admit again that the tribe left its influence on the city, and that the basis of citizenship in the city, and the division of the city into brotherhoods and clans, still rest on the principle of blood. Finally, we must admit that throughout the great classical period, and down to the end of the fourth century, there were many parts of Greece in which the city had not developed, and the tribe remained the basis of political life. The Phocians were a tribe living in villages; and the same is true of the Ætolians and many other peoples. It is difficult to speak of the Greek State as if it were a single type. Actual life presents us with many varieties. Not to speak of the difference between aristocracy and democracy (much that is said of the Greek State is only true of the Greek democracy), there is the great difference between the stem-state, or tribal-state, and the city-

[1] *Cf.* Zimmern, *op. cit.*, p. 82. "The real motive force that drove men into [the city] was not the need for efficiency in time of war so much as the need for efficiency in time of peace. They came together not so much for safety as for justice." Aristotle (*Pol.*, 1233, a 37-9: I. 2, § 16) writes "Justice is bound up with the State, for adjudication is the ordering of political society".

[2] "The Eleans founded their town after the Persian wars, but the old life in villages always remained, and there is no trace of any actual supremacy of the town of Elis." Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

state. But so far as we can speak of a type, the city-state, and more particularly the city-state of the democratic order, is that type. For political theory at any rate it is the one type that counts. Aristotle's conception of the State, and especially of citizenship, is a conception which only really suits the city-state, and the city-state of the democratic order. And when he builds an ideal State, that too has its centre in an ideal city, and it is the construction of that ideal city which engages his thoughts and inspires his imagination.

The Greek State and Slavery

"The city," it was said above, "was not necessarily the home of 'leisure,' nor did the life of its citizens rest on a basis of slavery, nor were they prone to a contempt of labour." Here we have to distinguish on the one hand between Sparta and Athens, and on the other between philosophy and actual practice. Leisure, a basis of slavery, and a contempt for labour, were all attributes of Spartan life: they were not of Athenian. The Greek philosophers, again, unite in postulating for the citizens of their ideal cities abundant leisure for high things, in admitting slavery as the necessary basis of that leisure, and in excluding from full participation in the State those who have not the leisure they consider necessary; but actual life, in Athens at any rate and in many other cities, did not square with their postulates, or agree with their theories. We can only judge the Greeks by the facts, and we can only judge the facts by what we know of Athens; for of other cities we know but little. What we do know suggests that in cities of an aristocratic type the ideals of leisure and freedom from base mechanic toil were cherished.[1] That is only what we should expect from aristocracies at all times. But aristocracy, as we have seen, is not the typical form of Greek State; and we must turn to Athens in order to discover the social ideals and the social basis of the normal Greek community.

Athens in her great days governed and defended herself by the services of over 7000 citizens out of a total resident citizen population of about 40,000. One out of every six Athenians, in other words, was engaged in regular and daily State-duty, either civil or military.[2] This seems to imply the existence of a large leisured class; but we have to remember that under the Periclean system the citizen was paid for his work. He was paid for service in the army and navy, and

[1] "At Thebes," Aristotle says (*Pol.*, 1278, a 25-6: III. 5, § 7) "there was a law that no man could hold office who had not abstained from selling in the market (or, as he says elsewhere (1321, a 29: VI. 7, § 4), 'from mechanical occupations') for ten years." Again, "in many oligarchies it is forbidden to make money in trade" (1316, b 3-4: V. 12, § 14). At Rome the Lex Claudia of 218 forbade senators to participate in the shipping trade or in public contracts (Mommsen, *History of Rome*, E.T., II. 386).

[2] Zimmern, *op. cit.*, p. 170, following Wilamowitz.

for attendance in the Council and the courts of law. Plato and Aristotle both objected to the system of pay, on the ground that it degraded the recipient and attracted the mob into politics. But the alternatives would have been either peculation or a close oligarchy; and the Periclean system was intended to attract into politics, and succeeded in attracting into politics, those whose time was worth money and could not be had for nothing. "Our officials," Pericles could boast, "can attend at the same time to public and private affairs, and the rest of the citizens are not prevented by attention to their own business from knowing adequately that of the city." [1]

The Athenians had, in the literal sense of the words, "their own business," and they gave it their attention. The population of Athens was a population of farmers and artisans; and the assembly of Athens was almost altogether composed of men who worked with their hands. One cannot trace at Athens any distinction, far less any gulf, between the 'working' and the 'professional' classes. All stood on a level; and the same word (δημιουργός, or 'folk-worker') could be used to designate the magistrate who worked for the State, and the doctor or potter who sold his services or his commodities to the public. The Athenians of the age of Pericles were like the Florentine artisans depicted by George Eliot in *Romola*: they combined wit and an interest in politics and literature with a decent and gentlemanly profession of their craft. Far from counting work any stigma, they took their glory from their membership of their craft,[2] and their pleasure in its artistic practice; but being for the most part their own employers, they did not work to excess, or lose themselves in their work. The aim of the artisan, it has been said, was "to preserve his full personal liberty and freedom of action, to work when he felt inclined and his duties as a citizen permitted him, to harmonise his work with all the other occupations which filled the life of a Greek, to participate in the government, to take his seat in the courts, to join in the games and festivals. . . ." [3] Work was part of a full and harmonious life, but it could not be so if it were pursued in excess. The Athenian would have objected to occupation in a modern factory, on the ground that its monotonous duration did not permit him to lead his own life; and he did object, in his own day, to some occupations as 'menial,' because they were unduly monotonous or prejudicial to a good physique. But he worked without any shame, and with a good deal of pride, in making good blades in a sword-factory, or artistic vases in a pottery, or even in fulling or tanning. Of the politicians who came into prominence after Pericles' death one was a leather-seller, one a lamp-

[1] Thucydides, II. 40.

[2] *ἔργον δ'οὐδὲν ὄνειδος· ἀεργείη δέ τ'ὄνειδος.* This is a verse which, Xenophon tells us, Socrates quoted.

[3] Zimmern, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-6, quoting from Salvioli, *Le Capitalisme dans le monde antique*, p. 148.

maker, and a third a rope-dealer. The life of Athens does not correspond in the least to Aristotle's dictum that "mechanics or any other class which is not a producer (δημιουργός) of virtue have no share in the State";[1] and his suggestion that "no mechanic or farmer or any such person should be allowed to enter the market-square of the free"[2] in his ideal state, is curiously remote from what we know of Greek life outside Sparta. The fact is that while the philosophers conceive of politics as an art or craft, and thereby pay an implicit compliment to the arts and crafts, they use the analogy in a sense which is ultimately detrimental to the craftsman. Since all arts require specialised knowledge, Plato argues, and since one man can only attain this specialised knowledge in one art, it follows that the art of politics can only be practised by a professional class which has acquired such specialised knowledge. This is the opposite of Pericles' conception that an adequate knowledge of politics can be combined with attention to private business. Aristotle's point of view is slightly different from that of Plato, but it leads to the same result. Since the state is by its essence an association in the good life of virtue, it follows that its members are only those who are "producers of virtue"; and an artisan, who is producing commodities, cannot at the same time be producing moral service. Here again the philosopher puts asunder as incompatible two things which in the conception of Pericles might well be joined together, and at Athens actually were. "In point of political influence, each of us is preferred in the administration of public affairs, according as he distinguishes himself in any branch, nor is a man honoured because he belongs to a particular class more than for his merit; while no man who is poor, but can render any good service to the city, is excluded from public affairs by the obscurity of his rank."[3]

If the Athenians were a people of artisans, their life can hardly have rested on a basis of slavery. It is true that at Athens there were perhaps some 80,000 slaves of both sexes, as compared with about 40,000 citizens,[4] and that this would allow two slaves to every citizen. But we have to remember two things. In the first place, a large number of slaves belonged to or worked for the State. Apart from the public slaves who acted as policemen and clerks, it is calculated that there were 20,000 slaves employed in the public silver-mines at

[1] Ar., *Pol.*, 1329, a 20-1 (VII. 9, § 7).

[2] *Ibid.*, 1331, a 34 (VII. 12, § 4). By "mechanic" (βάναυσος) Aristotle appears to mean men who worked with their hands (χερνῆτες or χειρότεχναι). Other "artisans" (τεχνῖται), as e.g. the doctor, are not βάναυσοι (*cf.* 1277, b 1, and Newman *ad locum*, III. 166).

[3] Thucydides, II. 37.

[4] The estimates of the total population of Athens vary from 300,000 to 400,000. This includes (1) citizens, their wives, and children, who must have numbered over 160,000; (2) metics, or resident aliens, to whom the Athenians were generous, and who numbered about 45,000 adults, or, including children, upwards of 90,000; (3) slaves, who are estimated at 80,000.

Laurium. Many, if not all, of these slaves were the property of private individuals, who took concessions and used slave-labour to work them. Nicias is said to have owned 1000 slaves in the mines. This is slave-labour pure and simple, in its worst or "plantation" form; and in so far as mining royalties enriched the State, and thereby made possible the achievements of Athenian democracy, the Athenian State and democracy may be said to have rested to that extent on a basis of slavery. In the second place, wealthy Athenians had often a large number of private slaves, whom they either hired out, for instance to building contractors, or employed in business on their own account, as, for example, in sword-factories. The wealthy Athenian, therefore, whether he used his slaves to work a concession in the mines, or hired them out to contractors, or used them in his own business, certainly owed his wealth to the labour of slaves. But this cannot be said of the ordinary Athenian artisan and farmer; and since such artisans and farmers were the great majority of the Athenians, it is in the light of their position, and their relation to slavery, that we have to decide how far Athenian life rested upon a slave basis. It must at once be admitted that many Athenian potters and other artisans had slave-apprentices at work in their shops; but when we have allowed for the slaves owned by wealthy men (and it is probable that a majority of the slaves of Athens were owned by men of means,[1] or, as we should say, capitalists), we cannot allow an average of even one slave to each Athenian artisan and farmer. Those artisans and farmers who were able to use the labour of slaves owed their superior position in life largely to their service; but there was always a large number of Athenians who had time to serve on juries and sit in the Assembly, or to attend the theatre and watch the games, who had no slaves at all. In other words, slavery was necessary to social superiority: it was *not* necessary for political privilege or intellectual development. An Athenian could enjoy the benefits of the political and intellectual life of Athens without the possession of any slaves. It is only fair to add, in conclusion, that apart from the slaves in the mines the position of slaves at Athens was on the whole good. The majority of slaves were skilled workers—potters, masons, sword-makers and the like—and they could only be made to give the best of their skill by good treatment. A slave might buy emancipation, or be promised emancipation at the end of a definite time, or be emancipated by his master's will. Personal outrage on a slave was at Athens from early times an indictable offence. In social life slaves were treated as equals, and in dress they were often indistinguishable from freemen. "The last extreme of popular liberty," Plato writes in the *Republic* (563 B), obviously thinking of Athens, "is when the slave bought

[1] We must allow a large number of slaves for domestic service in the houses of the well-to-do.

with money, whether male or female, is just as free as his or her purchaser."

Two things may thus be safely asserted. In the first place, the political life of Athens did not rest on a basis of slavery, except in so far as the State profits derived from the silver mines depended on slave labour, and in so far as the political life of Athens depended on those profits—which, to any considerable extent, it hardly did.[1] On the other hand, the wealth of the wealthy citizen, and the comfort of the comfortable artisan, both largely depended on the services of slaves. In the second place, there were two kinds of slavery at Athens—the unskilled "plantation" slavery of the mines, and the skilled slavery of the pottery, the sword-factory, and domestic life. The lot of the unskilled slave was hard: the lot of the skilled slave might fall to him in pleasant places. To the Phrygians, the Lydians, and the other Asiatics who were imported to Athens as slaves, the change from slavery at home to slavery at Athens may have been a veritable emancipation. But the fact remains that slavery penetrated the *social* life of Athens at every turn, even if it was not the condition and basis of Athenian political life, and that slavery, however charitably we may interpret its character, can never have made for righteousness. One out of every eight or nine of the inhabitants of Athens was a citizen: one out of every four or five was a slave. One out of every five or six of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom has a vote: it is difficult to estimate how many are labouring for wages on the very margin, or below the margin, of subsistence. It is equally difficult to compare the comfort of Athenian slavery with the discomfort of such free labour. Its comfort does not justify the former: its freedom does not justify the latter. But freedom, in any scale of values, is greater than comfort, for it is a thing of the spirit, and the very root and condition of all values. And the Athenian slave, after all, was not free.[2]

The Greek State and Representative Institutions

"The city," it was said above, "was not devoid of representative institutions, nor unacquainted with the political machinery which is connected with those institutions." If we look at the ἐκκλησία of Athens, which every one of the 40,000 Athenian citizens was entitled to attend at each of its meetings, about three times in every

[1] The annual revenue of the State from the mines is estimated at 50 talents. The annual revenue which Athens drew from the allies was 600 talents. The political life of Athens depended far more on the fact that she was an Imperial State than on the fact that she was a slave-owning State.

[2] In the whole of this section I am under the greatest of debts, which I know he will forgive (κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων), to Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*, and especially Part III, chapters VII. and XV. I cannot follow the whole of his romantic view of the Greek commonwealth; and I confess that slavery at Athens seems to me to have been slavery.

wrote the *Politics*, could not be ignorant of the existence of such representative institutions; and when, in Book IV, he discusses the possible varieties in the structure of the deliberative body, he comes near to suggesting a representative Assembly. "It is a good plan that those who deliberate should be chosen in equal numbers, by election or by lot, from the upper classes and the masses"—a suggestion reminiscent of the three-class system of modern Prussia.[1] A similar suggestion, similarly reminiscent of Prussia, appears in the method of election of the Council proposed by Plato in the *Laws*; while the methods of election which he suggests for the "guardians of the laws" and other officials are also decidedly modern.[2]

So far we have spoken of deliberative bodies: it remains to consider whether any of the executive authorities of the city-state had a representative character. At Athens, at any rate, we may detect the signs of a representative executive. The ten generals of Athens were something of a cabinet. They were directly elected by the people: they could be continued in their office for years at a time, unlike the other officials; and unlike the other officials, they had direct access to the Assembly. When a dominating spirit controlled the rest of the generals, as Pericles did for fifteen years in succession, he was virtually Prime Minister of the Athenian Republic, and Prime Minister in virtue of the fact that he represented the general will. After Pericles the function fell to the 'demagogue,' or προστάτης τοῦ δήμου, who took over the functions hitherto exercised by the στρατηγοί or the dominant στρατηγός. A demagogue was by no means what the term implies in modern times. He was what we should call a parliamentarian of experience and standing, who had gained the ear and the confidence of the Assembly, and who advocated, and sought through his influence with the Assembly to carry into effect, a line of policy. He held no office, and he ruled by influence. In the days when ostracism was in vogue at Athens, a successful demagogue could procure a vote of confidence by securing the expulsion of his rival; and the value of ostracism lay in the fact that it gave the direction of policy into the hands of one accredited adviser, and made for stability and continuity. When it disappeared at the end of the fifth century, the people had two or more rival 'leaders of the house,' and followed now one, and now another, with disastrous results. But in the fifth century we may say that Athens, either in the person of the leading general, or in that of the leading 'demagogue,' enjoyed something of a representative executive.[3]

[1] 1299, a 21 (IV. 14, p. 3), and Newman *ad locum* (IV. 250). The suggestion is further developed in VI. 3 (1318, a 11 *sqq.*), where, however, it is applied to the election of officials and judges.

[2] For the election of the Senate, *cf. infra*, p. 332. For the election of the "guardians of the law" and other officials, *cf. infra*, pp. 332, 335, 338.

[3] *Cf.* Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-5.

The Greek State and Education

But representation, after all, is in no sense the fundamental idea of the Greek State, as it is conceived by the Greek philosophers. Their key-word is not representation, but education. And this involves a different approach to the State, and a different conception of the State, from those which are involved in the theory of representation. We have already seen that the Greek State was regarded by the philosophers as an ethical society; and if we push that point of view further, we shall see that the State is necessarily a community in a common spiritual substance, and that the activity of its organs is necessarily an activity of education, and the imparting to its members of their share in that common substance. Society is an educational institution, by dwelling wherein each man has his human capacities elicited to the fullest extent; and conversely education is a social fact, which makes society cohere in virtue of a common substance of the mind. Again the State, in the sense of the organised government of political society, is an organ of education, gathering into one focus all the social influences that make for the education of humanity—all the suggestions that radiate from social opinion into the life of the individual; all the training and 'drill' which are involved in taking and keeping one's station in an organised society. Conversely, again, education is not merely, and not mainly, the education of the individual by the individual teacher and by individual study: it is education of a political society, and of the whole of that society in unison, by the social system in which they share, and by which they are modified and made. This, as we shall see, is the gist and kernel of the teaching of Plato in the *Protagoras* and still more in the *Republic*: it is the core of the thought of the *Politics* of Aristotle. It is also the lesson learned by Hegel from the Greeks, and transmitted by Hegel to his school.[1]

The community, then, is a community in a common spiritual substance, which it has inherited and which it must transmit. It is a community because it has inherited this substance; and because it must transmit this substance, it is also an educational structure. Now this substance was for the Greeks no mere abstraction: it was

[1] As I have written elsewhere, in commenting on Mr. Bradley's statement of Hegelianism in *Ethical Studies*: "Already at birth the child is what he is in virtue of communities: he has something of the family character, something of the national character, something of the civilised character that comes from human society. As he grows, the community in which he lives pours itself into his being in the language he learns and the social atmosphere he breathes, so that the content of his being implies in its every fibre relations of community" (*Political Thought from Herbert Spencer to To-day*, pp. 62-3). This passage might equally be a commentary on the *Protagoras*, *cf. infra*, p. 131. Starting from this basis, Plato argues that if the community makes the individual, it must make him consciously, by a conscious organisation of its education; and in the *Republic* he sketches that organisation. See Natorp, *Platos Staat und die Idee der Sozialpädagogik*, to which I am here indebted.

concrete and embodied in the law, written and unwritten, whether set in the statute-book and the constitution, or in the hearts of men. Law is thus the cohesive force of the State: it is what brings together and holds together society (*τὸ συνοικίζον καὶ τὸ συνέχον*). To Pindar it is "the King": to Herodotus it is "the Master": to Plato the citizens are "the Slaves" of the law. It is not only the cohesive force of the State: it is also, and because it is that, the Sovereign.[1] "All morality, not only civic, but also human—all the benefits of civilisation—appear as the gifts of the law, which the society recognises as its lord."[2] Nowhere in Greek literature does the fundamental sovereignty of the law appear in a more striking form than in that passage of the *Crito*, in which Socrates, as he lies in prison awaiting his death, is made by Plato to hold converse with the laws, and to acknowledge their claim on his final and supreme allegiance.[3] Freely as the spirit of Socrates ranged, he acknowledged himself the slave of the law. And what is true of Socrates is true of the Athenian people. They might appear, as they stood assembled in their Pnyx, sovereign under heaven. But they too recognised the sovereignty of the laws.[4]

Law is thus the common spiritual substance of a society, expressed in concrete form, and as such it is the cohesive force and the sovereign of a society. And further, since this substance has to be transmitted and imparted by education, it follows that the business of a State is to educate its citizens according to the law, so that they may receive its content into their being and thereby come into their heritage. Here we touch the two fundamental and interconnected principles of Aristotle—the sovereignty of the law, and the education of the citizens into conformity with the law. "The rule of law is preferable to that of any single individual; and on the same principle, even if it be better that a number of individuals should rule, they must be made guardians and servants of the law."[5] "There is no profit of the best laws, even if they have been sanctioned by every citizen of the State, unless men have been trained by habit and formed by education in the spirit of their society."[6] The function of the State is to train men according to its laws, and this function the magistrates, as agents of the State and servants of the law, have it for their duty to discharge. And thus we may draw a distinction between the problem of the ancient State and that of the modern State, which will help us to see why representation played a less part in the former than it does in the latter. The Greeks believed in the need of education to tune and harmonise

[1] *Cf.* Hermann Swoboda, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
[2] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 116. [3] *Cf. infra*, p. 122.
[4] It is argued by Aristotle in the *Politics* that the Assembly used the form of decrees to override the law and defeat its sovereignty. There is reason, however, as we shall see later, for thinking that Aristotle conveys an erroneous impression.
[5] Ar., *Pol.*, 1287, a 18 22 (III. 16, §§ 3-4). [6] *Ibid.*, 1310, a 14-17 (V. 9, § 12).

social opinion to the spirit and tone of a fixed and fundamental and sovereign law. The modern belief is in the need of representation to adjust and harmonise a fluid and changing and subordinate law to the movement of a sovereign public opinion or 'general will'.

It is obvious that there is a different conception of law behind these different beliefs. To the Greek, law was the inherited substance of sanctions, both moral and legal, which stood sovereign over a society. To us, it is a set of regulations, gradually accumulated, but needing constant revision, which determines the play of relations —relations which in the complex industrial societies of to-day are very largely economic—between the members of a given State. It is true that the Greeks changed their law; but it is also true that on the whole they regarded it as something given and permanent, which it was better not to change—"for the law has no power to command obedience except that of habit (gained through education in its spirit), and this can only be given by length of time, so that a readiness to change from existing laws to others enfeebles the power of law".[1] This is a different atmosphere from that in which we live to-day. We think in terms of progress, and we invert the relation of law and public opinion. We know that public opinion is always moving, and we believe that it is moving onward; and we conceive that, like a tide, it must carry the law along its course. We devise representative legislatures to mediate between public opinion and law, and, acting as the organs and exponents of the former, to modify the latter accordingly. It is the difference between a society looking back to a hallowed past, expressed in a sovereign law, and a society looking forward to a more attractive future, to be prepared by some new change of an ever-changing law. It is the difference again between a society with a static conception of public opinion as something already formed, and sovereign in its formed state, and a society with a dynamic conception of that opinion, as something constantly transformed, and as sovereign in each transformation. There are indeed points on which the conception of the representative state and the conception of the educational state meet. Mill's defence of representative government on the ground of the education which character and intelligence gain from participation in public functions shows such an approximation. But there is a broad gulf, in spite of any such points of contact, between the two conceptions.

There is one Greek thinker, Plato, who departs from the Greek conception of the sovereignty of law. In the *Crito*, indeed, and again in the *Laws*, he follows that conception; but in the *Republic* and the *Politicus* he specifically rejects the sovereignty of the law. That rejection was, however, the outcome of a zeal for an ideal moral

[1] Ar., *Pol.*, 1269, a 20-4 (II. 8, § 24).

basis of society transcending any rigid body of law: it was in no sense the result of a belief in a sovereign law-making body superior to the laws which it makes. Nor was it connected with any falling away from the educational ideal of the State. On the contrary, it was the result of a further extension of that idea. If the rulers of the State are to educate the citizens into conformity with the moral basis of society, Plato felt, they must themselves be educated to grasp that basis. And further, when once they have grasped it, so that it dwells in their minds and lives in their intelligence, then their living intelligence is the true sovereign, and in accordance with its truth they must educate their fellow-citizens. Plato, in fact, approached the problem of education from the point of view of the ruler more than from the point of view of the citizen. He had seen, or thought that he saw, the incompetence of ordinary rulers to grasp the fundamental principles of political society; and he had denounced in the *Gorgias* that incompetence, not sparing Pericles himself. He saw in philosophy and its study the cure of that incompetence, and he set himself in the Academy to provide the cure, and by a course of philosophic training to educate a school of trained rulers. The *Republic* is the programme of that course. But men trained in this course would have gone beyond the moral basis of society expressed in inherited law: they would have laid hold of the eternal basis, which varies not from time to time, nor from society to society. The *Republic* shows the Greek ideal of the educational state at its highest point; but just because it is pushed so high, the ideal departs from Greek ideas. In the *Laws* Plato returns within their limits; and his philosophy ends, as it began, in the circle in which Greek thought always moved—the sovereignty of a fundamental law, and the education of the citizens in conformity with that law.[1] ἡ πολιτική—political science or political art—is the science of lifting social man, through social education, into communion in the spiritual substance of social life expressed in a sovereign law.

[1] We shall, however, find reason to doubt whether Plato ever really returned within the limits of the law (*cf. infra*, p. 349). The end of the *Laws* seems to indicate that to the very last he was still a rebel against the rule of law, and still an advocate of the rule of free intelligence. On the other hand it should be added that in the *Politicus* he does not absolutely reject the rule of law. He admits that, under certain conditions, it may be a 'second best'.

Chapter III

POLITICAL THOUGHT BEFORE THE SOPHISTS

From Homer to Solon

IT is a fashion among Greek historians nowadays to draw parallels between the history of ancient Greece and that of the modern world. We read of the Greek "Middle Ages," the Greek "Reformation," the Greek "Renaissance". Historians differ in the parallels they draw; and while one may compare the whole period of the classical age of Greece, down to the end of the fifth century, with the mediaeval period of our history, on the ground that both began in migrations of tribes and both ended in "the discovery of the world and of man," another may compare the early period of Greek history, before the dawn of light in the days of Solon, with the period of our Middle Ages, and place the period of "Reformation" and "Renaissance" in the sixth century. If we follow the latter comparison, we may say that the political thought of the Greek Middle Ages is to be found in Homer and Hesiod, who, indeed, are its only writers. Homer is sometimes quoted as a believer in the divine right of monarchy:

> οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,
> εἷς βασιλεύς, ᾧ ἔδωκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω
> σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας.[1]

But the lines only refer to command in war, and the words are spoken by Odysseus to a disordered army, which he is seeking to reduce to obedience to its commander-in-chief. The Homeric King has his title as an officer of the community. All the chieftains of a stem bear the name of 'kings,' and all claim divine descent: *the* King can only be, and only is, distinguished from his fellows by the fact that he is the appointed officer of the whole community. Already in Homeric days the tribe is thus its own sovereign, and its nominal ruler is accredited to his position as its organ and representative. While Homer, in this sense, recognises monarchy, Hesiod only knows the chieftaincy of many *βασιλεῖς*. He rebukes in advance the 'sophistic' view held by the 'kings' of his generation; and to their philosophy, "Better be wicked than just," he answers by an appeal to divine retribution.[2]

[1] *Iliad*, II. 204-6. I remember hearing the first line quoted in this sense by the German ambassador to England, some ten years ago.

[2] *Works and Days*, 248-64.

A new era dawned in the days of Solon (*circ.* 600 B.C.). An economic crisis, of which the first mutterings may perhaps be detected in the verse of Hesiod, had visited Greece in the seventh century. The land of the poor had been eaten by mortgages and annexed by their wealthy neighbours; a new temper and new laws had to be found for Greece if chaos was to be avoided. The new temper was preached by Delphi: the new laws were found by law-givers like Solon. The preaching of Delphi was the inspiration of what is sometimes called the Greek Reformation. About 600 B.C. Delphi tore itself away from the tribe of the Phocians, and became a church-state. The oracle of Delphi was famous; its priests had an old tradition of their god, Apollo, as the inventor of purification from the guilt of blood: and they widened that tradition until they made him the interpreter of Greek ethics and the exponent of Greek law.[1] The gist of the ethical teaching of the oracle was the need of moderation. The beauty of temperance—the need of remembering that a bound is set to all things, which they may not overpass; that (as Pindar, echoing Delphi, sang[2]) "the way beyond the pillars of Hercules cannot be trod by the feet of wise men or fools"—these were its lessons. The lust of gain, which had wrought all the past trouble, must come under rule and regimen: "nothing in excess" must be for the future the motto of life. Thus was established a tradition which was to last long and to sink deep in Greek life—a tradition reinforced by the Pythagorean doctrine of Limit, and expounded in its classical form in the Aristotelian doctrine of the Mean.

If Apollo was the interpreter of ethics, he was also the exponent of law; and the law-givers, whose activity is coincident with the Greek Reformation, sought to translate into practice the Delphic lessons of limit and moderation. Later tradition spoke of Seven Sages, of whom Solon is the only historical figure; and it ascribed to the Seven a career of political activity, and something of a political philosophy couched in the form of proverbs—ῥήματα βράχεα ἀξιομνημόνευτα, as Plato says—in which some facet of truth, taught by experience or discerned by inquisitive eyes, was permanently preserved. The "sayings of the Seven Sages" are, indeed, largely ethical; but scattered among their ethical sayings we find political truths such as ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει—"Office will show the stuff of which a man is made".[3] Plato tells us that the fruits of their wisdom were dedicated by the Seven in congress to the temple of Apollo at Delphi,[4] thus attesting a tradition of their connection with the teaching of the god; and the Amphictyons are said to have in-

[1] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-8. [2] *Olymp.*, 3, 44-5.

[3] Plutarch, in the *Convivium Septem Sapientium*, introduces the Seven Sages in the act of discussing the conditions necessary to the greatest happiness of the State; and he professes to give the opinions held by each of the Seven.

[4] *Protagoras*, 343 b.

scribed their sayings on the temple-walls, so that they seemed to acquire something of the sanctity of a divine revelation. "In these celebrated names we have social philosophy in its early and infantile state."[1] Like the social philosophy of the Seven Sages, the political activity of the historical law-givers of the Solonian age followed the inspiration of Delphi. Their aim, so far as we can judge from the records of the work of Solon, was to apply the lessons of limit and moderation to the sphere of social and political life, and "to restore the unity of the State by restricting the use of wealth".[2] Solon sought to introduce into a State torn by the dissensions of rich and poor the ideal of social equality. He sought to put down the mighty from exerting the power of their wealth without limit, and he did what he could to exalt the poor. On the one hand he cancelled, by his 'Seisachtheia,' the debts accumulated on mortgage by the poor peasantry; he fixed a limit to the extent of landed properties; and he restricted by sumptuary laws the right of the wealthy to flaunt their wealth. On the other hand he attempted to re-establish farmers as free-holders on their farms; and by giving facilities for foreigners to settle in Attica in order to exercise some skilled craft he encouraged the rise of industry, which was to prove, in the long run, the salvation of the poor, and to rescue them finally from the dependence and misery of a purely agrarian regime. In these, and in other ways, he sought to institute social equality. The humanity of Attic law, it has been said, reflects his mild and pious temper. To protect the weak and the needy he allowed any Athenian citizen to undertake without risk, on another's behalf, a prosecution for a criminal offence; and herein he took a long step towards the institution of sure and evenhanded justice. His 'law of associations' is also noteworthy. "He laid down the principle that an association with a common cult was entitled to give itself statutes, whose validity for the members of the association the State would recognise, so far as they did not conflict with its laws. The law included even privateering and shipping companies, and the mention of the former proves clearly its antiquity. Here is erected the principle of freedom of associations; and it is significant that the Digest goes back to Solon's law."[3]

But the work of Solon went further. It was his purpose, as we learn from his own elegiac poems, in which he prepared and vindicated his work, to institute a general rule of balanced equality (or 'isonomy'), under which no class could either parade a claim of social superiority or enjoy undue political privilege. "I gave the people such power as sufficed, neither taking from their due honour, nor giving yet more than was due: I gave heed that men who had influence and were famous for their wealth should suffer nothing

[1] Grote, *History of Greece*, IV. 23. [2] Zimmern, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
[3] Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-1.

unseemly: I stood with my shield held aloft to guard both the rich and the poor, nor did I permit either to triumph wrongfully." To one thinking in modern terms, it is natural to say that Solon was at once a legal reformer and a constitution-maker. The distinction is really foreign to Solon's age and to Greek history in general. He did not make, and there never existed at Athens, a separate constitutional law. What he did was to enact the set of rules which have just been described as instructions for the officials of the State, intended to control their administrative action. Treating the officials as the servants of the law, he defined the law in writing, so that a written code superseded an unwritten tradition; and while he thus put into operation the Greek conception of the rule of law, he implicitly founded a constitutional scheme based on its sovereignty, in which the officials naturally fell into their place as its servants. To make sure that they should act according to law, he made them responsible to a public court, whose institution was his great innovation. This court was the Heliæa, a popular court of some thousands of judges, in which the poorest of the citizens could sit and judge, and which (besides hearing appeals in exceptional cases) had the right of reviewing the conduct of every official at the end of his term of office. Herein "Solon made the people sovereign of the verdict"; and on Aristotle's principle that "the sovereign of the verdict is sovereign of the constitution," he implicitly established popular sovereignty, or democracy.[1] But as his work stood, he only instituted democracy in the judicial sphere. He gave the people not so much the control of public policy, as the certainty of being governed legally in accordance with known rules.[2] It was after all a less matter, though it was by no means unimportant, that he admitted the poorer Athenians to the Assembly, and thus gave them a voice in the election of their officials.

Almost all the details of Solon's work, except those which are contained in his own poems, are still matters of dispute to-day. Among the Athenians themselves, by the end of the fifth century, there was already much dispute about the meaning and extent of his work; and these disputes were by no means academic, but vitally connected with actual affairs. On the one hand the democratic party claimed him as the father of the Periclean democracy; on the other hand the 'moderates,' who were oligarchically inclined, and who attempted a political revolution in 411, regarded him as the father of an 'ancestral constitution' (πάτριος πολιτεία) of a moderate and mixed type, neither democratical nor yet oligarchical, to which, they urged, Athens ought to return. Aristotle seems to have followed the latter line of interpretation, both in the Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία and in the *Politics*, and to have held that Solon

[1] Arist., Ἀθην. πολ., IX. § 1.

[2] Zimmern, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1.

established the ancestral constitution by a proper mixture of the different elements of the State.[1] There is indeed much that is reminiscent of Solon in the political philosophy of Aristotle. Like Solon, he believes in the sovereignty of law. Like Solon, to whom he specifically refers,[2] he believes that the people at large must receive, as a minimum of political power, "the right of electing to offices and calling the magistrates to account". Above all, like Solon he cherishes the conception of the neutral and moderate and mediatory State, which is a proper mixture of the different elements, and permits no element "to triumph wrongfully".

This is perhaps the chief conception which the legislation and the elegies of Solon bequeathed to the Greeks. The neutral State, which the Greeks were to seek so long, and in so many different ways, in order to escape the strife that raged between the different sections of their society, found in him its first exponent. It was a conception natural to the troubled age in which he lived. At Megara the poetry of Theognis presents a sharp antithesis of the 'good' and the 'bad,' and the poet laments the overthrow of a nobility of birth by a mob "wearing the skins of goats, and knowing nought of decrees or of laws".[3] If Solon had guided the State into its desired haven at Athens, Alcæus at Mitylene "cannot comprehend the strife (στάσις) of winds" that buffets the ship of state which Pittacus, ruling (590-580 B.C.) as dictator after a revolution in which Alcæus and his brother nobles had been banished, is seeking to steer into safety. Even at Sparta, stablest of Greek States, there was sore trouble, springing from questions of the land; and the Spartans had to face a rebellion of their oppressed serfs in Messenia. The verse of Tyrtæus, contemporary with this trouble and rebellion, is not only a trumpet-call to battle, but a political sermon in praise of law-abidingness (εὐνομία).

Pythagoreans and Ionians

The next epoch in the history of Greece, and of the political thought of Greece, is connected with the Ionic Renaissance. The Reformation which came from Delphi had been largely Doric in origin and tone. The great Doric State of Sparta always stood in close relations with Delphi; and the influence of the teaching of the oracle was towards a Doric way of life. The vases and the architecture of the sixth century both show a trend towards the Doric mode.[4] But in the colonial land of Ionia conditions had always been different from what they were on the Greek mainland. Here life had definitely run into the groove of cities from the first, and the old sanctities of tribal life had never found a home. In their

[1] *Cf. Pol.*, 1273, b 35 *sqq.* (II. 12, §§ 2-6).
[2] 1236, b 33-4 (III. 11, 8).
[3] Theognis, vv. 350-1.
[4] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 34.

place something of a rational and secularist temper flourished, in combination with an advanced and almost effeminate type of material civilisation. In the hot-house air of the Ionic cities thought and discussion played freely on all things in heaven and earth; and, perhaps aided to some extent by the influence of contact with the East, men began to turn to natural science, and from the days of Thales (*circ.* 585 B.C.) to investigate the problems of the material world. Puzzled by the riddle of the physical universe, seemingly composed of many elements, yet liable to changes which transmuted each one of these into another, they cast about to find the one Identical, the single substratum of matter which underlay all the elements, and from which they all proceeded. This single substratum of matter, this one stuff of which all things were made, however it might be conceived, they called Nature.[1] It is perhaps too readily assumed that before Socrates men studied Nature alone, and that thinkers were first induced by his example to study Man (ἤθη).[2] But the conclusions at which the pre-Socratics arrived about Matter were not mere theories of physical scientists dealing with a problem of chemistry: they were, to those who propounded them, solutions of the riddle of the universe. As such, they applied to the life of man as much as they did to the life of the earth. Conclusions with regard to the elements of physical nature and their mutual relations involved similar conclusions about the elements of man's moral nature and the connection of those elements—about the elements of the State, and the scheme by which they were united.

This step from a supposed physical truth to its moral counterpart was perhaps made most readily by the Pythagoreans of the fifth century, when they turned into a system of philosophy the Rule of Pythagoras, an Ionian from the Island of Samos (*circ.* 530 B.C.), who had settled and founded a school in Southern Italy. The unity to which they reduced physical elements was not a material substance, such as had been postulated by most of the Ionic philosophers, but the more immaterial[3] principle of number. Such a principle was easily extended to the moral world of man's conduct. The underlying principle of that world, it might be argued, was also one of number, or the observance of number.[4] In this way the

[1] Nature really meant to the Ionians what we mean by Matter. They "had drawn the outlines of the theory of matter in the physicist's sense of the word" (Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 27).

[2] Aristotle, however (on whose dicta this assumption is based, *cf. Met.*, 987, 1-4 1078, b 17-19), while he speaks of Socrates as περὶ τὰ ἠθικὰ πραγματευόμενος, does not say that he was the first to turn to Ethics, but that he was the first to introduce definitions, and that he introduced them in the sphere of Ethics.

[3] It is true that the Pythagoreans regarded number as extended in space.

[4] For such an extension one may compare Plato, *Gorgias*, 507 E-508 A. Plato argues that moral selfishness (πλεονεξία) contradicts the physical fellowship and friendship which holds together earth and heaven, and contravenes the principle of geometrical equality. He seems to be contending, that as, *e.g.* the planets are kept

later Pythagoreans attained their idea of justice. Justice was a number ἰσάκις ἴσος : it was a number multiplied into itself, a square number. A square number is a perfect harmony, because it is composed of equal parts, and the number of the parts is equal to the numerical value of each part. If justice is defined as a square number, it follows that justice is based on the conception of a State composed of equal parts. A number is square so long as the equality of its parts remains: a State is just, so long as it is distinguished by the equality of its parts, and justice is the preservation of such equality. But how is such equality to be preserved? By taking away from the aggressor, who has made himself too great and his victim too small, all the profit of his aggression, and by restoring it in its integrity to the loser. Hence the further definition of justice by the Pythagoreans as requital (τὸ ἀντιπεπονθός): with what measure you mete, it shall be measured out to you again. It is obvious that in this conception of justice there are elements which were to influence the trend of later political thought.[1] Here is the idea of the State as a sum of equal members: here is the idea of its aim as consisting in a harmony or equipoise called justice, which preserves the nice adjustment of the members. In the *Republic* Plato adopts this conception of justice, and gives it a more spiritual content and a deeper truth. Justice is an adjustment, but an adjustment which gives to each of the spiritual factors which go to form the State—reason, spirit, and appetite—its right and proper place. In Aristotle's theory of 'particular' justice the formal and numerical aspect of the Pythagorean conception may perhaps be traced. The theory of distributive and rectificatory justice in the Fifth Book of the *Ethics*, and the application of a theory of justice to commerce in the First Book of the *Politics*, may both owe something to Pythagorean teaching.[2]

together in fellowship by the fact that each keeps its appointed place, and does not violate equality by trespassing on that of its neighbour, so men should abide in a fellowship secured by the fact that each keeps his appointed place, and does not violate equality by trespassing to "get more" (πλεονεκτεῖν). This is also the teaching of the *Republic*. Plato, who inherited much from Pythagoreanism, inherited perhaps more than anything else its mathematical interests, and approached philosophy from mathematics; while Aristotle, more like Empedocles, made his approach from biology (Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 11, 71). There is probably a Pythagorean element in Plato's comparison of the order of the human with that of the natural world, *cf. infra*, p. 136.

[1] Burnet, however (*Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 317; *cf.* also his *Greek Philosophy*, p. 90), regards the definition of justice as a square, as "a mere sport of the analogical fancy". But the same might be said of Herbert Spencer's conception of the State as an organism—which is, none the less, a vital part of his system. And it is especially easy to apply mathematical analogies to justice: *cf.* Maine, *Ancient Law* (p. 58): "The equal division of numbers or physical magnitudes is doubtless closely entwined with our perceptions of justice; there are few associations which keep their ground in the mind so stubbornly or are dismissed from it with such difficulty by the deepest thinkers".

[2] Aristotle distinguishes 'universal' justice, which is generally directed to the maintenance of social and moral order ("the public side in law, and especially . . . its criminal element"), from 'particular' justice, which deals with the distribution of rights by the State to individuals and the correction or redress of private wrongs (*cf.*

Thus, perhaps, had the Pythagoreans of the fifth century helped the growth of political science by their application of the principles of natural philosophy to the State. Some of them went beyond the application of number to the conception of justice, and taught a definite theory of politics. The essence of that theory was the divine right of wisdom to rule the State; and its outcome was a belief in monarchy of a theocratic type, ruling *jure divino* over its subjects as God rules over the world. It is possible that such teaching is later than the fifth century, and only an echo of the philosopher king of the *Republic*; it is also possible that it preceded and helped to influence Plato.[1] A later generation assigned to Pythagoras himself, in the sixth century, the tenets of his later disciples, and believed that he had attempted to realise them in practice. Tradition told of a club of Three Hundred founded by Pythagoras at Croton, which consisted of young men trained, like the Platonic guardians, in philosophy, and, like them, governing the State in the light of their philosophy. The Pythagorean principle κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων ("the goods of friends are common property") was equally interpreted into an anticipation of the communism advocated by Plato. We may, however, regard these traditions and interpretations as a later reading of Platonic ideas into the mind of 'the master': *ipse non dixit*. The work which Pythagoras himself achieved, and the doctrines which he himself taught, were of a simpler pattern; and though he anticipated Plato, he did not anticipate him either by training young men for a life of politics or by advocating communism. When we clear away from his name, on the one hand the later developments of his teaching due to the Pythagoreans of a later age, of which we have already spoken, and on the other the Platonic elements which crept into the later tradition about him, we shall find that what he did was to found a society, and to inculcate 'a way of life' on its members. He was the first, but by no means the last (*supra*, p. 10), for whom philosophy issued in a Rule to be communicated to a circle or 'order' of disciples; and herein he may already be said to have anticipated Plato. He founded his order in Croton, a city of Southern Italy. The order became involved in political disturbances; but there is no evidence for the view that it ever sought to interfere in politics, or espoused the aristocratic side. The Rule of Pythagoras was a personal rule of purification, to be achieved by the practice of medicine and the study of 'music'. The members of the order practised medicine to purge the body, and music for the purging of the soul. Their medicine

Sir Paul Vinogradoff, *Columbia Law Review*, Nov., 1908). He objects to the Pythagorean definition of justice as mere requital (*Ethics*, v. 1132, b 22); but he holds that proportionate requital is the very bond of the State. It is not only the basis of the action of the State in its work of distribution and correction: it regulates the voluntary dealings of the citizens with one another, and is the basis of commercial exchange.

[1] *Cf.* Campbell's introduction to his edition of the *Politicus*, pp. xx-xxvii. It is possible that Plato refers to these tenets in the *Politicus*; *cf. infra*, p. 274.

was a matter of diet and prevention rather than of drugs and cure; they lived ascetic lives, holding certain foods taboo, and joining in vegetarian syssitia, which may be the basis in reality of the communism they are supposed to have professed. They held philosophy to be the highest form of music,[1] and by philosophy they understood the study of science and especially of mathematics, to which they made no small contribution. "The originality of Pythagoras consisted in this, that he regarded scientific, and especially mathematical, study as the best purge of the soul."[2] It is obvious that Plato was under no small debt to the teaching of Pythagoras. The training of the guardians of the *Republic* by gymnastic and music corresponds closely to the purging by medicine and music advocated by Pythagoras. Plato lays stress upon diet as part of gymnastic (403 E-410 B); and indeed it was the regular rule in actual Greek life for medicine to be practised in the gymnasia. Plato, again, like Pythagoras, is convinced of the value of mathematics; and the 'music' of the *Republic* rises, in the course of Plato's exposition, from Homer and the lyre to astronomy and solid geometry.

There are two other elements in the teaching of Pythagoras which had a deep influence on Plato and Greek philosophy in general. One is the doctrine of the Three Classes of men—the lovers of Wisdom, the lovers of Honour, and the lovers of Gain—which perhaps implies a correlative doctrine of the Three Parts of the soul—Reason, Spirit, and Appetite. The debt of the *Republic* to Pythagorean doctrine on these points is both obvious and profound: the whole framework and scaffolding of the *Republic*, which depends on the analysis of the State into three classes and the Soul into three parts, may be said to be Pythagorean. The theory of 'Limit' is another element in the teaching of Pythagoras which affected both Plato and Aristotle. In his musical studies, which he had conducted on mathematical lines, he had found that of the four 'fixed notes' of the gamut the two intervening notes each constituted, in different ways, a Mean between the two extreme and opposite notes, the high and the low. This led him to believe that the Mean was a mixture or blend (*κρᾶσις*), or, in musical language proper, a harmony or 'fitting together' of two opposites. Similarly in the study of medicine he found that health was a harmony of vital forces and a blend of their opposition. In this way he came to believe that the Mean was the natural Limit or ordering bound (*πέρας*), to which opposites were necessarily related; by their relation to which they became at once ordered in nature and intelligible to man; and in which they were harmoniously reconciled. The influence of this

[1] Music (*μουσική*) is the cult of the Muses—not of the muse of poetry only, but of all the nine, or, as we should say, of the liberal arts.

[2] Burnet (*Greek Philosophy*, pp. 41-2), whom I have followed in this account of the early Pythagoreans.

belief on the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle, and on their conception of the relation of 'form,' as a limit, to 'matter,' lies beyond our scope. But it is relevant to notice that the theory of Limit, and of the Mean as a limit, influenced the political theory of Aristotle very definitely. Not only does he believe in a limit of wealth and a limit to the size of the State: he believes in the 'mean' or mixed constitution, which is a blend of the two opposites of oligarchy and democracy, and in which the States of actual life may attain their true order or form. Here the theory of Pythagoras blends with the practice of Solon to produce the conception of the neutral and moderate State. But, as far as we know, the idea of Limit was not applied by Pythagoras himself to politics; and it is only with his later successors that the principle of Limit was applied to ethics (the finite and limited being made the symbol of virtue, and the infinite and unlimited the symbol of vice), or that the laws of number were applied to politics, and justice, as we have seen, was conceived to be of the nature of a square.

Pythagoreanism not only influenced Greek theory: it also influenced Greek politics. It has been suggested, as we have seen, that the constitution created by Cleisthenes at Athens, with its Sieyès-like logic and its mathematical treatment of Athenian life, shows traces of Pythagorean influence; and it has been noted that Cleisthenes had connections with Samos, the home of Pythagoras. This is pure conjecture. We cannot trace any influence of Pythagoreanism on Greek politics till the fourth century; and by that time the influence is one not of Pythagoras himself, but of the later Pythagoreans. Thebes had come under their influence: the Pythagorean Lysis was the instructor of Epaminondas, who called him father; and Aristotle tells us that at Thebes, "as soon as the rulers became philosophers, the city began to flourish".[1] Archytas of Tarentum was a famous Pythagorean of the fourth century, who for a long time was supreme in his native city, and served seven times as its general, in spite of a law to the contrary. A man like Archytas, general of his city, and also teacher of philosophy to his disciples in his garden precinct at Tarentum, may naturally have served as a model for the *Republic*.[2] And indeed, when we remember that Archytas was living at Tarentum, and Epaminondas at Thebes, in the very days when Plato wrote, the *Republic* begins to assume a decidedly practical aspect.

When we turn from the history of Pythagoreanism to the early Ionic philosophers of Asia Minor, and attempt to discover how far they applied their physical conclusions to political speculation, we enter upon an obscurer theme. The members of the Ionic school, as we have seen, were physicists, occupied with the problem of matter,

[1] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II. 23, § 11.
[2] Plato knew Archytas personally: *infra*, pp. 114-5.

and seeking to discover the fundamental unity or φύσις (whether of water, or of air, or of fire) which underlay all its 'appearances'. To what extent they touched upon human life in their teaching and writings it is difficult to discover. It is possible, and it has been suggested, that all the works entitled περὶ φύσεως dealt with politics. Heraclitus' work on Nature is certainly recorded to have been written in three books, one of which was concerned with politics.[1] Yet the recorded utterances of Heraclitus (*circ.* 500 B.C.) upon politics are rather of the nature of disjointed apophthegms in the manner of the Seven Sages, than indicative of a political theory. That sense of the physical laws of the universe, which led him to say that the Furies would track down the sun if it left its course, finds its counterpart in the saying that the people must fight for their law as much as for their city's walls. This parallel between the law of the world and the law of the State appears also in Anaximander, a precursor of Heraclitus, when he speaks of the physical elements as "suffering sentence of *justice* and paying the penalty one to another for their *injustice*," and explains thereby the phenomena of change. But Anaximander is only drawing a parallel between the human world and the world of matter; and Heraclitus also seems to have advanced no further than parallelism. The parallel he draws is between matter and the soul of man; and the doctrine he propounds is that fire is the φύσις or single substratum of both. He is an Ionian physicist, after all; and the utmost reach of his philosophy is a parallel, pushed to the verge of identity, between the physical constitution of matter and the physical constitution of the soul. There is an eternal contention of fire and water; and fire is the principle of life, and water of death. "War is the father of all things"; but the duty of man and the world—the 'justice' and the truth of both—is to cling to fire. For truth resides in τὸ ξυνόν, the common and identical substance, which is fire in the natural universe, and fire in the soul of man. This vitalising fire permeates all things; to this "the thinker must cling, and not to his own wisdom, even as a city should to law". "All human laws are sustained by the one divine law, which is infinitely strong, and suffices, and more than suffices, for them all." Thus are human laws explained by the physical law of the world: the physical law vivifies the laws of the moral world. Laws are emanations of that one law: they are embodiments of the common substance of the soul and the world, which is fire. This line of thought led Heraclitus to adopt an aristocratic temper. "Though wisdom is common, the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own"; but "what wisdom or sense have the masses? many are evil, few are good". "The

[1] Diog. Laert., IX. 5, διήρηται εἰς τρεῖς λόγους, εἴς τε τὸν περὶ τοῦ παντὸς καὶ πολιτικὸν καὶ θεολογικόν. Diogenes adds that one of the commentators, Diodotus, held the work to be not περὶ φύσεως, but περὶ πολιτείας: what was said περὶ φύσεως was in the nature of an example or illustration. This view, however erroneous it may be, is interesting; it shows that a commentator believed that Heraclitus had made the transition from physics to politics. See also what is said below on Antiphon, p. 67.

Ephesians ought to hang themselves: they have expelled Hermodoros, the best man among them, saying 'Let there be no best man among us'." Yet "one man is as good as ten thousand to me, if he be the best". He who has kept his soul "dry," and clung to fire, is the natural ruler of men. Here we see something of a Platonic character in Heraclitus: the one man who has clung to the Common (who has seen, as Plato would say, the Idea of the Good) is better than ten thousand others. And yet again there is something in Heraclitus of the Stoic cosmopolitan: the "wise man" is wise by clinging to the common unity which pervades all the world; and the ideal State of such a man will be, in the long run, a State which embraces the world.

Some of the Ionic philosophers exercised an influence in actual politics. If we may count Xenophanes among the philosophers, we can even say that in one of them the practical motive was dominant. He was living and writing his elegiac verse at the end of the sixth century, when the gulf between the Greek and the Persian East was beginning to yawn wide; and he sought to fortify his fellow-countrymen, and to dissociate them from the East with which they were so closely connected, by preaching to them the lessons of the Delphic Reformation, and thus bringing them into line with the Greeks of the mainland. Ionian secularism had already shaken current beliefs in the gods; and Xenophanes, inspired by a moral indignation against representations of the gods which made them thieves and adulterers, and only encouraged vice, used the results of Ionian science to attack polytheism and to disprove the very existence of the gods of its worship. No other Ionian has so definitely practical a bent; but some even of the professed philosophers were not without an interest in practical affairs. Heraclitus, we are told, refused to take any part in public life at Ephesus, but he was at any rate 'king' of Ephesus, the priest of a branch of mysteries; and Thales (*circ.* 585 B.C.), the first of the Ionian physicists, is reported to have urged the Ionians of Asia Minor to unite in a federation with its capitol at Teos.[1] The report comes from Herodotus: the suggestion of a federal State is remarkable. Like Thales, the Eleatic philosophers of the fifth century, who represented a revolt against the whole of the physical philosophy hitherto current, also exercised an influence in politics. Parmenides is said to have given laws to Elea: Zeno, his pupil, is recorded by Strabo to have deserved well of his State, and is said to have attempted to defend its liberty against a tyrant. A like activity is also recorded of Empedocles of Agrigentum, poet, philosopher and biologist, who stands outside all the schools. He would appear to have been a democratic leader in his native city, and a

[1] Aristotle illustrates his practical wisdom, in the first book of the *Politics*, by the story of the "corner" in oil-presses.

champion of equality: he destroyed the caucus of the Thousand at Agrigentum, and was offered but refused the position of king.

The Transition from the Physicists to the Humanists

It is when we turn to the Athens of the later fifth century that we first find any real political thought existing as something independent of physical speculation. However much attention the physical philosophers may have paid to political life, their political theory was but an off-shoot of their cosmology, and an accident of their attempt to find a material substratum out of which the world of change was produced. When we attempt to discover what Athenians were thinking in the later fifth century, we seem to see men reflecting primarily about politics and the world of man's conduct and institutions: if they turn to physics, it is "by way of illustration," and to get examples (which, they fancy, will serve as proofs) for their political ideas.[1] Physical science had come to Athens with Anaxagoras, during the ascendency of Pericles, who may have introduced the philosophy of Ionia to Athens as part of a policy of imparting to the Athenians "something of the flexibility and openness of mind which characterised their kinsmen across the sea".[2] Archelaus of Athens a disciple of Anaxagoras, and according to tradition the master of Socrates, was, we are told by Diogenes Laertius, the last of the physicists, and the first of the moralists, delivering lectures on law and justice. It was he who first drew the famous distinction between φύσις and νόμος in the world of human affairs, and taught that "the noble and the base exist by convention (νόμῳ) and not by nature (φύσει)".[3]

It was natural that the Greeks, and more particularly the Athenians, should soon turn from considering the riddle of the universe (for their thinkers began with the greatest first) to consider the riddle of a smaller κόσμος, and to inquire into the 'nature'

[1] This is the opposite of what we have just seen in Anaximander and Heraclitus. They had argued from politics to physics—or at any rate from man to matter: this is to argue from physics to politics. One may detect a trace of this line of argument in the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides (538-551), where it is argued that as night and day interchange equally on their yearly course, each yielding place to the other, so there should be equality and interchange of office in the State. Similarly Plato, in the *Republic*, uses the physical analogy of the dog to justify the assignation of the same political duties to man and woman; and Aristotle justifies slavery in the first book of the *Politics* by examples of similar subordination in nature. (A German writer, whom I followed too implicitly in the first edition (Dümmler, *Prolegomena zu Platons Staat*), has suggested that behind the passage in the *Phœnissæ*, and some other passages in other plays of Euripides, there lies a political treatise which Euripides had used, and whose writer had attempted, by a parallel between the order of the world and the order of the State, to justify the theory of a democratic State acting under the sovereignty of law. This is probably a carrying of the search for *Quellen* to too great a length. German writers are somewhat prone to discovering political treatises supposed to have been written in Athens during the Peloponnesian War; *cf. infra*, p. 79.)

[2] Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 277. [3] Ritter and Preller (8th ed.), § 218 b.

of the State and its relation to the individual. After the attempts of the Ionian physicists to solve the mystery of physical matter, and to find a single basis of all its changes, there was bound to come a reaction towards the study of man, a reaction proceeding from men more interested in human nature than in physical science.[1] Here we might have expected the Greeks, believing as they did that the State was a moral order and each citizen a member thereof, to begin with the State, when they turned from things physical to things human. But with the Sophists of the later fifth century we seem to find such an expectation falsified.[2] In their teaching (at any rate, in the teaching of those whom Plato discusses) there is a detachment and even a glorification of the individual. Political thought seems to be sufficiently developed to run into individualism. A new and revolutionary spirit begins to appear. Hitherto the conception of φύσις had been used in a conservative sense. It had served, if anything, to justify the existing order of things, and to sustain the ancient *mos majorum*. Pythagoreans had found in their interpretation of 'Nature' a basis of justice: Heraclitus had been led by his sense of the stability of "the common" to emphasise the majesty of human law. When we come to the Sophists we still find φύσις a current term; but φύσις is now often subversive. Opposed to νόμος, or convention, it supplies a standard by which the State and its law are judged and found wanting. How had this great change come about?

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 101.
[2] In reality, however, the Sophists are still believers in the State—provided that it is reformed and reconstructed: *infra*, p. 148 n. 1.

Chapter IV

THE POLITICAL THEORY OF THE SOPHISTS

The Rise of Ethical and Political Speculation

THE natural tendency of early Greek thought was one which accepted the order of the State and the rules which it enforced without murmur and without question. Men were born, and lived, and died, under ancient customs, whose origin no man knew. It was dimly felt that they were divine: it was certainly recognised that they were rigid and fundamental. No enacted law (νόμος) had yet come: an unchanging custom (δίκη or Right) guided the lives of men. The sense of an inevitable order of human life was so powerful, that by comparison the life of the earth, with all its flux and change, with its lightning and tempest, might well seem incalculable and indeterminate. In human life all was appointed. You did *this*, and *that* followed. It was not so in Nature. "Man lived in a charmed circle of law and custom, and all around the world was lawless."[1] It was possible, as we have seen, for a thinker like Anaximander to attempt to import order into the physical world, by showing that there was a principle of 'justice' in all its changes, and by arguing from the undoubted fact of man's law to the probability of a law in the world. On the other hand, when thinkers had detected a law in the world, it was natural that they should use this law to illustrate and to defend the similar and equally valid law of man. But the process of history was none the less slowly undermining the stability of human order. Colonisation, which led to the formation, by human hands, of new States with new laws, was tearing men loose from the old vesture of custom, and unsettling traditional stability. A new religious movement came: a fresh ritual, a system of 'mysteries,' appeared, resulting sometimes in the growth of new religious societies independent of the State, sometimes, as at Athens, in an alteration of the State religion which admitted the new ritual into its pale. Legislators became active in many States: a Solon or a Charondas gave laws to Athens or to Catana. Here was an obvious making of law by man: was all law of a similar institution? Had legislators everywhere laid down laws (νόμους τιθέναι): had peoples everywhere adopted laws (νόμους τίθεσθαι)? If so, the conclusion was natural that the State and its

[1] Burnet, *Int. Journ. Eth.*, vii. 328 *sq.* (*cf. Greek Philosophy*, pp. 105-7).

law was either the creation (θέσις) of an enacting legislator, or the convention (συνθήκη) of an adopting people. In any case it was obvious that enacted law varied from city to city; and men were naturally driven to ask whether there was any single substratum or φύσις beneath all *its* changes. The problem of matter which had occupied the Ionians had now become a problem of man. We stand face to face with an antithesis between φύσις, or permanent identity, and νόμος, or conventional variety, in the world of human things, which corresponds to the distinction drawn by the Ionian philosophers between the single and permanent physical basis, and the many and variable physical 'appearances,' of the visible universe.

While the process of history was leading to such results, the growth of human knowledge was tending in the same direction. New data had been collected by travellers and recorded by logographers. Much was known of the customs of different peoples and tribes, and considerable attention was devoted to anthropology in the Athens of the fifth century.[1] The idyllic usages of Nature's children, the uncontaminated Hyperboreans or the unspoiled Libyans, might serve social reformers as arguments in favour of communism or promiscuity. If a study of anthropology led to any scientific conclusion, it must have driven men, contemplating the infinite variety of savage customs, to doubt the existence of any natural or universal law. The laws of Nature are the same to-day and yesterday, in Greece and in Persia: fire burns everywhere, and at all times. But here were ten or a hundred different customs of marriage, or burial;[2] nor was there any one thing, it might well be thought, which was 'common and identical' everywhere. There could be nothing here which was the product of Nature: it must all be the product of man. Law was a convention: the State itself was based on a contract.[3] Thus, while the study of physics had tended towards the conception of a single underlying substratum of all matter, the anthropological study of the human world worked towards the conception of an infinite diversity of institutions. The old relation was inverted: Nature abode by one law, and men hovered between many. Physics and anthropology stood opposed to one another; and their opposition issued in the antithesis of natural law and of human custom. It is partly, perhaps, in this way that an antithesis came

[1] The wealth of anthropological detail in Herodotus is sufficient proof of this attention.

[2] Herodotus notes the differences of custom with regard to burial: Euripides remarks on the manner in which some people make merry over a funeral, and some make lamentation. Herodotus, Burnet remarks, is driven by his scepticism to lay stress on conventions as the only certain and tangible thing (*Greek Philosophy*, p. 107).

[3] The same ideas were applied to the problem of language, and attempts were made on the one side to show that language had a natural origin (φύσει) in involuntary exclamations, on the other to prove that it was a code upon which men had agreed (θέσει) for ease of intercourse. See Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, E.T., I. 394 *sqq.*

to be made between two terms, one of which comes from the study of natural science, and the other from that of human institutions.[1]

The movement of history in the fifth century, rapid and vigorous as it was, made change inevitable. A great effort of national defence, like the Persian wars, must in any case have given an impulse to freedom of thought, by increasing both national and individual self-consciousness. "Proud of their achievements," Aristotle says, "men pushed further afield after the Persian wars: they took all knowledge to be their province, making no distinction, but seeking wider and wider studies."[2] In Athens this awakening, comparable to that of Elizabethan England, was still more vigorous than elsewhere. Political change followed close on the war of independence. The hegemony of the Delian League intensified Athenian pride; and the political changes which took place within Athens itself opened a free field for popular discussion in the Assembly and the courts of law, and attached a practical value to ability to think and capacity to express one's thoughts. It was the work of the Sophists at once to express this new self-consciousness, and to satisfy the practical demand both for new ideas and for words in which to clothe them.

The General Characteristics of the Sophists

Broad and general as was the new movement, so broad and so general was the work of the Sophists who sought to be its teachers in the Athens of the later fifth century. Some are grammarians; and they raise the fundamental question of the origin of language —"Is it of human creation, or a natural thing?" Some are logicians, eager to discuss conceptions like "the Same" or "the Different," or to argue upon the nature of predication. Most of them, and pre-eminently Gorgias, are rhetoricians, for rhetoric is what the young politician desires; and most of them, again, have views about morals and politics, for everybody is interested in such things. But these views vary from hedonism to a defence of traditional morality, and from an apology for tyranny to a defence of the reign of law. The Sophists are versatile: "they are the historical romancers, the theosophists, the sceptics, the physiologists

[1] The *Antigone* of Sophocles indicates another path by which men advanced to the distinction of φύσις and νόμος. The law of the State forbids Antigone to bury her brother: a higher law wills that she should. "The unwritten laws, whereof no man knoweth whence they come" (*Antigone*, 453-7; *cf. Œdipus Tyrannus*, 865 *sqq.*), must over-ride the laws of the State. The problem of a 'conflict of laws' seems to have attracted Sophocles: it recurs in the *Ajax*.

[2] *Politics*, 1341, a 30-2. Incidentally, it may be remarked, the Persian wars struck a heavy blow at the influence of Delphi, and went a long way to weaken the hold of religion on the Greek mind. Apollo had stood "disgracefully neutral" (Zimmern, *op. cit.*, p. 177): "it was men and not gods" who had saved Greece. Humanism took the place of religion; and Sophocles sings: "Of all strong things nothing is more wonderfully strong than Man. . . . Language he has taught himself, and wind-swift thought, and city-dwelling ways" (*Antigone*, 332, 355-6).

of their day".[1] The acme of sophistic versatility was Hippias of Elis, who once appeared at the Olympic games dressed in garments altogether made by his own hands, and who was at once poet and mathematician, mythologist and moralist, student of music and connoisseur in art, historian and politician, and a voluble writer in every capacity. It was not what the Sophists taught (for they were far from forming a school, or from holding one set of opinions: they were free lances, one and all)—it was the fact that they taught at all, that they were the first professional teachers of Greece, and that their teaching was meant to give practical help in politics, which gave them their importance. To go to the Sophists was to go to the university—a university which prepared men for their after-life, and, since that life was to be one of politics, prepared them to be politicians, exactly as Plato hoped that the plan of education sketched in the *Republic* would prepare his guardians. The Sophists have been called half professors, half journalists;[2] they were half teachers and thinkers, half disseminators of things new and strange, paradoxical and astonishing, which would catch the ear. With something of the charlatan they also combined something of the philosopher.

It follows, therefore, in the first place that the Sophists were not a school, with a single set of tenets; and, in the next, that they were not confined to any single subject, but were rather the professors and teachers of several. It remains to advance two other negative propositions. First of all, they were not 'Sophists,' as a modern reader might tend to think, in the sense that they loved to play with sophisms, or to make the better cause appear the worse. They were rather the professional practitioners of *σοφία*, as the artist is the professional practitioner of art; and though they were professional they were not necessarily paid. The receipt of pay was indeed a reproach directed by Plato and Aristotle against the Sophists, but it was directed against the Sophists of the fourth (and not those of the fifth) century, from whom Plato and Aristotle, like Isocrates, sought to distinguish themselves on the ground that they taught liberally the liberal arts, while the Sophists taught professionally a professional technique. It is true that the Sophists of the fifth century did take pay, though they often left it to their pupils to fix the amount; but it is also true that they taught the humanities, and that it was not, primarily at any rate, for the sake of pay that they did so. In the second place the Sophists were not generally radicals, nor is the age of the Sophists the parallel to the age of Voltaire and Rousseau and the Encyclopædists. We must not be misled by some of the references to the Sophists in Plato into treating all the Sophists as dangerous 'Levellers' in politics, or

[1] Dümmler, *Prolegomena zu Platons Staat.*
[2] Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, E.T., I. 413, 414.

precursors of Nietzsche[1] in ethics, or agnostics in matter of religion after the manner of Voltaire. The tone which Plato himself adopts towards Protagoras in the dialogue which bears his name conveys a sufficient warning to the contrary. The real novelty of the Sophists is that they represent the first phase of that reaction against Ionian philosophy of which we have already spoken, and which also appears, if in a different form, in the Eleatics. Negatively they seek, as Gorgias and Protagoras sought, to prove the futility of such philosophy; positively they attempt to turn inquiry towards things human, and in that attempt they are at one with Socrates. The bent of the new inquiry in their hands was entirely practical. Like all Greek thinkers, they aim at communicating something of a practical aid to right living. They offered instruction in goodness or practical wisdom: they promised to impart knowledge of the art of managing States and families rightly.[2] It was, in a word, a *Lehre des Rechts* rather than a *Lehre des Unrechts* which they professed.

On the other hand their own origin, and the political conditions of the Athens in which they taught, combined to create difficulties and to twist their teaching awry. They were for the most part foreigners who resided in Athens as metics, admitted, like all other metics, to a large measure of social equality, but deprived of political privilege. Gorgias came from Leontini in Sicily; Protagoras from Abdera, and Thrasymachus from Chalcedon, in the Thracian part of the Athenian Empire; Hippias was connected with Elis, and Prodicus came from the island of Ceos. They came to Athens because it had become, thanks to the Athenian Empire, the intellectual centre of Greece; but the pupils they found at Athens were naturally the rich, and the rich were naturally out of sympathy with the democratic institutions which Pericles had installed in Athens. The Sophists professed to teach eloquence and practical ability (ἀρετή) in general. The rich were anxious to learn; but they were anxious to learn for their own ends. They wished to learn eloquence in order to escape with immunity from accusations before the popular courts: they wished to learn practical ability in order to control elections, to gain what they regarded as their due influence in the State, and ultimately to modify the constitution in an oligarchical direction. To democratic eyes the eloquence taught by the Sophists might well appear the art of making the worse cause appear the better, and "goodness in the art of managing States" might well seem "little more than skill in the arts of party intrigue".[3] Out of the ranks of their pupils

[1] Heraclitus, when he says that God is "beyond good and bad," seems to draw much nearer than most of the Sophists to Nietzsche. But some of the Sophists were also Nietzschian, *cf. infra*, p. 71. On the whole, however, it is wise to remember Plato's dictum (*Rep.*, 493), that the Sophists caught and expressed what was already in the air.

[2] *Protagoras*, 318 b-319 A; *cf.*, *Rep.*, 600 c.

[3] Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

came oligarchical leaders. The real contriver of the attempted revolution of 411, says Thucydides, was the orator Antiphon, "a man second to no Athenian of his day in practical ability (ἀρετή): a proved master of device and of expression; who did not come forward in the Assembly, nor, by choice, in any scene of debate, since he lay under the suspicion of the people through a reputation of cleverness; but who was better able than any other individual to assist, when consulted, those who were fighting a cause in a law-court or in the Assembly".[1] When we reflect that the Sophists, however involuntarily, might exercise a practical influence of this character, and when we remember that they were foreigners, insecurely settled in Athens, we can realise at once the difficulties of their position and the odium into which they might fall. But we shall do them injustice, nevertheless, unless we remember that there were among their number many who were sound conservatives. Prodicus, who wrote the apologue of the choice of Hercules, was a preacher of ethics, famous in antiquity for his discharge of his civic duties. Protagoras, who, like Plato, wrote a *Republic*, and who was the greatest of all the Sophists, was equally conservative. It is true that he is said to have been banished from Athens for a work denying the gods; but his work probably denied only the possibility of knowing the gods, and it is quite possible that the moral he drew from that impossibility was the duty of worshipping "the gods whom the city worshipped" and showing due piety in accordance with the law. Nor would a revolutionary have been employed, as Protagoras was by Pericles, to help in the founding of an Athenian colony at Thurii in 444 B.C.

Protagoras and the Earlier Sophists

Gorgias of Leontini came to Athens later than Protagoras (in 427 B.C.), but we may consider his teaching first, since it is simpler and more negative than that of Protagoras. He was essentially a teacher of Rhetoric who exercised a great influence on the development of style; and it is by his name that Plato calls the dialogue in which he treats of Rhetoric. With moral and political philosophy Gorgias did not concern himself; but he attacked the prevalent physical philosophy, and by seeking to prove its barrenness he helped to suggest that the proper study of mankind was man. His 'climax' was famous: he attempted to prove the impossibility of the existence, the knowledge, or the teaching of 'Being'. Orator and teacher as he was, he cannot have held that everything was incommunicable and inexplicable; and his climax must be understood as directed, like the *Homo mensura* doctrine of Protagoras, against the physicists and their theories of a single primordial substance.

[1] Thucydides, VIII. 68, quoted in Jebb, *Attic Orators*, p. I. Jebb remarks (p. 3) that he "must have felt the sophistic influence, but there is no evidence for his having been the pupil of any particular Sophist"

Rhetoric was another matter; and it was communicable and explicable enough. If he asserted that there was no such thing as truth, it was only in regard to the truth of which the Ionian philosophers had spoken: his assertion had no reference to morality, and conveyed no suggestion that there was no moral truth, or that might was the only right in the moral world.

Protagoras of Abdera (500-430 B.C.) came to Athens earlier than Gorgias: he carried further, and with a more positive suggestion, the attack of Gorgias on the physicists; and unlike Gorgias, he was a moral and political philosopher. Like Gorgias, and like all the Sophists, he was a teacher of eloquence, and here his importance lies not so much in the realm of style (though we are told that he insisted on the correct use of accidence, or ὀρθοέπεια, and wrote a work on that subject) as in the sphere of logic. He was the first of the Greeks to profess Dialectic: he undertook, we are told, to make the weaker cause the stronger. He also taught his pupils Commonplaces, or prepared topics (τόποι), which they had to commit to memory for ready use in disputation. By his Dialectic and his Commonplaces he contributed something to the formation of an art of logic; but his chief importance depends on the philosophy which he sought to oppose to the Ionian physicists. In a work called *Truth, or the Throwers*, he advocated a robust empiricism against their attempts to find some hidden unity of the universe. "Man is the measure of all things:" things exist, or are non-existent, according to the measurement or determination of the common sense of the individual. The dictum as it stands may seem to commit us to an extreme individualism. Things are for each man what they seem to each man; and if we translate this mental philosophy into the moral sphere, we shall apparently have to give our adhesion to an individualist theory of ethics and politics, which makes each individual the standard and canon of what is right. That, however, was not the doctrine of Protagoras. It is true that he admitted that there might be two "counts" (λόγοι) or determinations of everything, opposed to one another, and yet both true for the individuals by whom they were made. But he held that one of the two might and would be "stronger," and he believed that this should be made to appear the stronger by argument. The stronger "count" is apparently the normal: it is the measurement of a thing made by the normal man. The common sense of the individual is after all common; and measurement is not unique, but according to the common standard of normal sense. It follows that Protagoras was not a mere individualist, but an empiricist who believed in the normal common sense of man.. It follows, again, that when he spoke of making the weaker cause the stronger, he was not inculcating the right of every man to make any view triumph at any cost, but rather the right of common sense to vindicate a belief that was normal because it appealed to a normal judgment.

There is a certain conservatism in this doctrine. Things, after all, are what they seem, if only a good common sense is brought to bear on their understanding. The moral and political philosophy of Protagoras is definitely conservative. Just as he was able to combine an apparently individualist doctrine of man as the measure of all things with a belief in the validity of normal common sense, so he combined something of a belief in the origin of the State from individual needs with a doctrine of the supremacy of a general law. Just as he does not believe in a single 'nature' of the material universe, imperceptible by normal sense and contradicting all its perceptions, so he does not believe in a single 'nature' of human society, unperceived and unrealised by the moral sense of the generations, and contrary to all their laws. He stands for empirical sense against the physicists of Ionia: he stands for the rule of law, and the solid moral sense which it expresses, against all who would champion the sovereignty of *Naturrecht* in human affairs. We are dependent on Plato for our knowledge of his ethical and political teaching; but there is every reason to think that the *Protagoras* gives a true representation of what he actually taught.[1] From Plato we learn that he connected the State with education, and conceived it, in a genuinely Greek way, as an educational institution. He sought to establish his view partly by the use of analogy, and partly by a theory of social origins. He showed how, just as the teacher set before his pupils passages from good poets, full of instruction, and compelled them to learn them by heart and mould themselves to their image (325 D-326 A), so the city set before its citizens the laws, and compelled them to learn them and live accordingly (326 C-D). In his theory of social origins he distinguished three stages in human development. The first stage (320 D-322 B) was something of a state of nature. Men knew the arts of industry and agriculture, but they did not know the political art of civic life. Destitute of cities, they were the prey of the beasts; and sheer need drove them to the foundation of civic communities. Thus they attained a second stage of development (322 B), in which, by founding cities, they sought union and preservation. But though they had cities, they had no knowledge of political art, and each injured his fellows, till they were scattered and destroyed. Then came the third stage (322 C-D). Zeus sent Hermes down to men, bringing Reverence and Justice to be principles of order and bonds of union in cities of a new foundation; and thus the State came finally into existence. In this final form the State is a spiritual society, divinely sanctioned, and held together by the spiritual bonds of Reverence and Justice. As such, it is the supreme organ of the education of its members; and by the education of them all in the spirit of its laws it raises them to

[1] Natorp (*Platos Staat und die Idee der Sozialpädagogik*, p. 28) remarks that the agreement of Protagoras' doctrines with those of Plato is a proof that they are really the doctrines of Protagoras, since it was remarked by ancient writers that the *Republic* of Plato showed a large agreement with the writings of Protagoras (Diog. Laert., III. 25).

the stature of a full humanity. "The State is thus the true educator: its whole function is one of education and civilisation; the individual educator—father or mother, teacher or Sophist—is only the agent of the community and the organ of the common will."[1]

Of the full bearing of this educational theory we shall have to speak later, when we come to consider the *Protagoras* of Plato (*infra*, p. 131). The theory, it is obvious, has close affinities with that of Plato; and if in the *Republic* Plato carries it to further lengths, advocating an education in science and philosophy, and the rule of philosopher kings, the *Republic* is nevertheless conceived in a spirit akin to that of Protagoras. Protagoras is no individualist; and though he may speak of something like a State of Nature and the voluntary foundation of cities, he was no believer in the doctrine of a Social Contract. The cities of a later foundation, which endured where those of an earlier foundation had failed, rested on something far deeper than contract; and the purposes of the States which arose in those cities were something far broader than any contractual "guarantee of the rights of men against one another". Protagoras did not anticipate the Sophist Lycophron in founding the doctrine of Contract. It would be truer to say that he anticipated Plato in teaching the doctrine of the educational State resting on the divine basis of justice; and he certainly conceived the State as an ordinance of God, and existing *jure divino*, rather than as a creation of men, existing *ex contractu*. The educational theory of the State is natural to a great teacher who professed himself to teach the political art; and if he believed, as Plato suggests,[2] that his own teaching was indispensable, we may perhaps forgive him his zeal. At any rate he believed that law was a good schoolmaster to bring men to a right way of living; and if he insisted on the need of his own training, he also recognised that social life was a training in itself.

In the teaching of Protagoras, therefore, there is no antithesis between Nature and Law, or at any rate, so far as the two are in any way opposed, Law is regarded as a higher thing, due to divine sanction, which rescued men from a 'state of nature' in which they were no better than beasts. Nor is Protagoras a preacher of individualism—much less of the superman: he is interested more in the State than in the individual, and far from vindicating the rights of the strong man armed with efficiency to dominate his fellows, he asserts that all men participate equally in Justice and Reverence by the command of Zeus, and that all, equally endowed thereby with 'political art,' have an equal voice and concern in political deliberation (*Protagoras*, 322 C-323 A). Sophist as he was, Protagoras was thus an apostle of the State, who preached the sanctity of its law and the equality of its members. Of the other Sophists of the fifth century, there were two

[1] Natorp, *op. cit.*, p. 7. [2] *Rep.*, 600 C.

—Prodicus of Ceos and Hippias of Elis—who won some fame in their generation. Prodicus is only recorded as a teacher of ethics and an inventor of grammar, who paid special attention to the discrimination of synonyms. Hippias of Elis, as we have seen, was a pretender to universality of knowledge[1] who, among other things, professed to teach a system of mnemonics and was interested, like Hobbes at a later date, in the squaring of the circle. If we may trust the account given by Xenophon[2] of an argument between Hippias and Socrates on the nature of Justice and its relation to Law, it would seem that Hippias had something of a philosophy of law which is not without interest. He agrees with Socrates that Justice and Law are coextensive, and that the Just and the Legal are identical, though he is troubled by the fact that those who have enacted laws often reject and change what they have enacted. He agrees, again, that there are certain unwritten laws, which are observed in the same way in every country, and which cannot have been enacted by men (who could never have met for their enacting, or understood one another if they had met), but must have proceeded from the gods. The suggestion of a *jus naturale*, distinct from the positive laws of each State, and superior to those laws (since it proceeds from divine commandment, and not, like them, from human enactment), may obviously lead to an antithesis between 'natural law,' which is universal and divine, and mere positive law, which is local and human. In a passage of the *Protagoras* (337 C-D) Plato suggests that Hippias made that antithesis. Hippias, a stranger from Elis, is made to say to his Athenian audience: "I hold you all kinsmen and relatives and fellow-citizens by nature, though not by law; for like is by nature kin to like, but law, the tyrant of mankind, often constrains by violence in contravention of nature". The words of Hippias almost seem to suggest in advance the Cynic view of a cosmopolis in which all men were equally fellow-citizens. In any case the antithesis here suggested between Nature and Law is of great importance, and brings us face to face with a new and radical trend of sophistic teaching. Nature, whatever may be understood by Nature, is now opposed to Law; and Nature is enthroned above Law. The ultimate result of her enthronement will be the liberation of the individual from the educating care of the State and its laws, now regarded as mere duress; and it may even be, with some extreme enthusiasts, the enthronement of the superman.

The Antithesis of *φύσις and νόμος*

The antithesis of Nature and Law in the view of Sophists of a radical type meant that the moral content of tradition and custom and institutions was opposed to an ideal code of morality based on a conception of the 'first principle' of human life. To understand

[1] Plato, *Hippias minor*, 368 B-E. [2] *Memorabilia*, IV. 4.

the origin of this opposition we must perhaps recur to the theories of the physical philosophers of Ionia.[1] The early physicists, when they attempted to find a permanent basis underneath all the flux of the corporeal world, always attempted to discover it in a corporeal body. Even the Pythagorean 'numbers' were extended in space: even the Anaxagorean νοῦς, or Reason, was, after all, a substance. But if the permanent basis of the world is corporeal, and the world of perception is also corporeal—if both, in a word, exist *in pari materia*—then one of the two must be unreal. In the result, the world of actual perception was regarded as unreal: the new reality of Nature forbade the real existence of the world of sense. The saying of Democritus of Abdera, the founder of the atomist theory of matter, is significant: "By convention (νόμῳ) exist colour and taste: really (ἐτεῇ) there are atoms and the void". The error lay, we may say, in the conception of the nature of things as corporeal: if it had been regarded as spiritual—something not outside the everyday world, but immanent and indwelling as the principle of its life—such a result need not have followed. Similarly, when the early moralists attempted to find a permanent basis or 'nature' underneath all the flux of the moral world of man's life and institutions, they sought, not a spirit, but a code, of like material with the many codes of which it was the basis. It followed on this procedure, that the permanent basis of morality which they sought was conceived as annihilating the many codes and laws of actual life.[2] The relation of the ideal code of morality to ordinary codes could only be one of opposition: the latter were so many backslidings, so many perversions, of the former. Here again, as in physics, the error lay in making the permanent basis no less material and objective than the facts which it underlay, and in conceiving the 'nature' of morality as external, and therefore inimical, to the ordinary custom of moral life. What thought should have done was to find an inner spirit pervading the sphere of ordinary moral life, and permeating the sphere of ordinary physical existence. What it actually did was to use the dividing sword of an external and material 'nature' to annihilate the mere 'appearances' of the physical world and the mere 'customs' of the moral universe.

On this basis the ideal code, which constitutes the 'nature' of ethical and political phenomena, will be everything which the ordinary codes, to which it is opposed, are not. Just as the 'nature' of the material world, being conceived as the opposite of ordinary objects, came to be regarded as spatial extension, or as pure but

[1] *Cf.* Professor Burnet, *Int. Journ. Eth.*, VII. 328.

[2] "If we look for ethical reality in one code of rules which are really binding instead of seeking it in that which gives binding force to the moral codes which already exist, we are bound to regard the latter as arbitrary and invalid" (*Int. Journ. Eth.*, VII. 330).

materialised Reason, so the nature of the moral world, being equally conceived as the opposite of the ordinary rules of social life, came to be regarded as the mere pleasure and satisfaction of the individual. The parallel here suggested between the physical doctrines of the Ionian philosophers and the moral theories of the more radical Sophists suggests a further reflection. Even if the Sophists mark a reaction against the physical philosophy of the Ionian School, it is none the less possible that many of them were affected by its materialistic trend. At any rate we have Plato's word for the view that conceptions of the physical universe underlay their conception of human life. It is a materialistic view of the world, as without God or Reason, which produces the theory that "might is right".[1] Starting from the assumption that the physical world in which we live came into existence not through the work of Reason, or by the creation of God, but by Nature and Chance, and that its units were compounded together "by the chance of the immanent power of each," men have invented a moral philosophy in harmony with their assumptions. They hold that in the moral world, as in the physical, "the chance of the immanent power of each unit" should be the dominant factor of composition, and that "the right life according to Nature is to live in domination over others" to the limits of one's power. They believe that all human laws to the contrary, differing as they do in different places, are mere products of art and convention; that it is absurd to live in slavery to others according to such laws, which have no natural validity; and that all men have a right to all that they can conquer by might. It is true that in this argument Plato is treating the development of thought ideally and not historically. He is showing the inner affinity, visible to the philosophic mind, between a naturalistic philosophy of the material world and a naturalistic conception of ethics. An inner affinity does not constitute an historical affiliation. Sophists who talked of the natural right of the stronger may have had no philosophy of the material world; and indeed we have seen that the Sophists in general turned their attention deliberately away from all such philosophy. Yet that philosophy was in the air; and no one who has realised the extent to which the scientific theory of evolution has been, in our generation, both consciously and unconsciously, transferred to the sphere of ethical and social philosophy, can fail to see the fundamental truth of Plato's argument.

The Sophist Antiphon

A recently discovered fragment of the sophistic literature of the later fifth century may serve to illustrate the views of the school described by Plato. The fragment comes from a treatise by the

[1] *Laws*, 889 *sqq.*; *cf. infra*, p. 363.

Sophist Antiphon.[1] Antiphon, who has to be carefully distinguished from his contemporary and namesake, Antiphon the orator, the oligarchical leader in the revolution of 411, was a writer on many subjects. To his pen are attributed, by the critics of antiquity, treatises on "the Interpretation of Dreams," on "Concord," on "the Statesman," and on "Truth". It is from the last of these treatises that the newly discovered fragment comes. The treatise on Truth was in two books, and it dealt mainly with questions of physics and metaphysics. But it also dealt, as the new fragment proves, with questions of ethics and politics. This is a fact of considerable importance; for it corroborates the suggestion, which was made above, that works of a physical character were also concerned with human affairs. But the new fragment of Antiphon goes farther, and it corroborates another suggestion. It shows that there was a connection, such as Plato suggests, between physical and ethical speculation, and that a naturalistic view of the universe led to a naturalistic system of ethics and politics. Such a system definitely appears in the fragment of the treatise on Truth; and its great importance lies in the fact that in it, for the first time, we can read the *ipsissima verba* of a Sophist who opposed a naturalistic conception of φύσις to νόμος, and believed in the superiority of φύσις. In its light we can test Plato's account of sophistic tenets, and from it we may discover that he was not criticising positions which he had invented for the purpose of criticism, but views which were actually held. In this way the fragment of Antiphon is of no small value for the understanding of the *Republic* and other Platonic dialogues.[2]

Antiphon uses the conception of "nature," which is the "truth" or reality of which he writes, in two directions—partly to discredit the enacted law of the State, as a matter of mere opinion and convention; and partly to overturn the current distinction between Greek and barbarian, and to suggest that both alike share in the common 'nature' of humanity. If we ask what he means by φύσις, the answer is not altogether clear: we can only guess from the fragment the character of the premisses which he had probably stated already, and which he now simply assumes. The rules of Nature, we are told, are necessary: they are laws, apparently, in the sense in which the law of gravitation is a law. If men attempt to

[1] The fragment is printed in the *Oxyrhynchus* Papyri, XI. no. 1364, pp. 92-104. I only came across it (thanks to the kindness of Mr. J. U. Powell, who drew my attention to it) after writing the preceding paragraphs, which it goes far to corroborate. A translation, based upon that of Dr. Grenfell, is given in the appendix to this chapter.

[2] Incidentally the fragment disproves the conjecture of some German scholars, that Antiphon was a conservative, of the type of Protagoras, who believed in the supremacy of law (*cf. infra*, p. 79). On the contrary he is a critic of law and a disciple of "nature".

contravene them, an inevitable reaction follows, just as a fall inevitably ensues on any attempt to contravene the law of gravitation. As far as one can gather, Antiphon holds that it is the law of Nature for men that they should seek life and shun death, and consequently that they should seek the things that promote life, or comfort, and shun the things that involve death, or discomfort. This is a simple naturalistic view like that of Hobbes. But whereas Hobbes thinks of men as by Nature curtailing one another's lives when they are brought into contact, and therefore as naturally needing the coercion of law to induce them to respect one another's lives, Antiphon regards coercive law as opposed to the natural law of life. He hardly seems to face the problem raised by the fact that men have to live together: he follows a line of abstract individualism.[1] He argues that human law sets up rules of behaviour which contradict Nature's law that each individual should seek life and comfort. Its rules are adventitious (ἐπιθέτα): they are only based on covenant and convention (ὁμολογηθέντα): they are the product not of truth but of mere opinion. They bid us do things which are unnatural, because they are unpleasant, and only make life poor and nasty. They bid us never to be aggressors against our neighbours, but at the most to defend ourselves against their aggressions: they bid us never to do evil to our parents, even when they do evil to us, but to return their evil with good. Antiphon does not conclude from these arguments that Right is Might, or that a man should overturn the laws openly and boldly, to the best of his power, in order to gain greater fullness of life; but he does conclude that it is good to evade the laws wherever one can do so without detection. The penalties of the law are really only the penalties attached by man's opinion, and one evades these penalties if one evades any appearance at the bar of that opinion. Generally, and on the average, law-abidingness is wrong, because generally, and on the average laws are contrary to Nature, which is the standard of right. Sometimes, indeed, obedience to the law may be expedient: but it is seldom even that. He who looks to the law for redress is generally deceived; for the lawcourts are seldom capable of giving proper redress. The aggressor has as good a chance of making good his case, and persuading his judges, as the injured party. In a word, law-abidingness is generally wrong, if you look to the standard of right: it may sometimes be expedient, if you look to the standard of expediency; but on the whole it fails to satisfy either standard.

Just as Antiphon seeks to discredit the conventional law of the Greek city-state, so he seeks to overturn the conventional distinction of Greek and barbarian. We know that there were Greek thinkers of this period who held the distinction between noble and commoner to be contrary to Nature. we know that there were others who

[1] *Cf.* the appendix to this chapter, *infra*, p. 84 n. 3.

held the same view of the distinction between freeman and slave.[1] Here we have a thinker who goes still further, and anticipates the cosmopolitanism of a later age by attacking the fundamental distinction which current opinion held to exist between the Greeks and the rest of the world. *Φυσις* is again the clue. The physical attributes of Greek and barbarian are the same. If we reduce the matter to mere terms of sentient life (and it is really to those terms that Antiphon has already reduced the matter of law-abidingness), we shall see that, judged by these terms, all men are like and equal. They breathe the same air through the same bodily organs. "Nature," as Hobbes says, "hath made men equal in the faculties of body". Hobbes adds that they are also equal in the faculties of mind. Perhaps Antiphon said the same: but at this point the fragment ends, and we cannot tell how he pursued the argument.

Realism is thus the note of Antiphon's thought. He goes, like Machiavelli, to the *verità effettuale delle cose*; and he finds such truth, in the realm of human affairs, not in what men think, but in what, by the constitution of their bodies, and as they come from the hand of Nature, they actually are. They are seekers of life and pleasure: this is the true law of their life, and on this ground one man is as good as another. Any view which makes man other than seekers of life and pleasure, or which makes some men better than others, is artificial and fantastic. It is a mere figment of the mind, made by opinion. Most of the presumptions of the laws are such figments. Our duty towards our parents, for instance—a duty to be discharged, apparently, no matter how they may behave to us—is a figment. And our superiority to those beyond the pale—as if there were any pale in the realm of Nature—that, again, is another figment.

Plato's Account of Sophistic Theories

Apart from this fragment of Antiphon, it is to Plato that we owe the knowledge which we possess of the teaching of the school, if it may be called a school, which opposed Nature to Law, and often, if not always, proceeded to identify Right with Might. We may distinguish two forms of that teaching, as it is recorded by Plato. One, which is more moderate, appears at the beginning of the second book of the *Republic*.[2] The other and more extreme form appears in the *Gorgias*, and, in its logical extremity, in the first book of the *Republic*.

[1] *Cf. infra*, p. 7[illegible].

[2] The teaching of Antiphon, on the whole, belongs to this moderate form. There is, perhaps, enough resemblance between the argument of Antiphon, and the argument expounded by Plato at the beginning of the second book of the *Republic*, to suggest that Plato was acquainted with Antiphon's work. But it should be noted, on the other hand, that he never mentions Antiphon by name.

The moderate and current form, as it is stated by Glaucon (not a Sophist, but an elder brother of Plato himself, and one of the *dramatis personæ* of the *Republic*), is as follows: "To do injustice is, by nature, good; to suffer injustice, evil; but the evil is greater than the good. And so when men have both done and suffered injustice, and have had experience of both, not being able to avoid the one and obtain the other, they think that they had better agree among themselves to have neither: hence there arise laws and mutual covenants; and that which is ordained by law is termed by men lawful and just" (*Rep.*, 358 E-359 A). In this theory the individualism of the present projects itself into the past. Because men are to-day fully conscious of their individual will and its claims, they begin to ask how it came about that the men of the past, who are imagined to have been equally conscious, surrendered the free exercise of that will and the full assertion of those claims. Such a surrender, some will say, can only have been the result of a voluntary act, by which men abandoned a satisfaction limited by the weakness of individual strength for the advantages of co-operation. Here we get the conception of a voluntary contract of each with all. But the State constituted by that contract has only, as it were, a conditional validity. It is only a *pis aller*. The right which it enforces is not the ideal right, or natural good, of complete self-satisfaction: it is the practical right, or conventional good, of a satisfaction limited by mutual forbearance. It is not the might of the strong, but the necessity of the weak; or, if in a sense it is might, "the might is the weakness of the many combined against the strength of the few".[1]

So far, individualism does not present itself in its extreme form. It involves only two conclusions, which may be regarded as moderate—that there was an original condition of Nature, in which men lived as individuals according to their own good pleasure, and that there was afterwards an act of contract by which these individuals surrendered, in a conscious bargain, the free exercise of their own wills in return for the protection and preservation of their lives. In this moderate form the theory of a social contract stated by Glaucon may perhaps have been a tenet of Democritus. There are several reasons for so thinking. In the first place, we know that Epicurus in later days held the theory of a social contract, and as he was in many respects a follower of Democritus, it seems natural to suppose that he was following Democritus in his political theory. Democritus, like Epicurus, professed a theory of hedonism, and such a theory, emphasising as it does the individual, is naturally allied with a political theory which finds the origin of the State in a contract of individuals. Again, we know that Democritus believed in the conventional and artificial origin of language; and we are told that he attributed secondary qualities like colour and taste to 'conven-

[1] Jowett's translation of the *Republic*, introduction, p. 32.

tion'. What he believed with regard to language and secondary qualities may well have been his belief with regard to the State.

We have now to consider the second and more extreme form of the antithesis of Nature and Law, as it is stated in the *Gorgias* of Plato. Here we find an utter rejection of the conventional justice instituted by the social contract, and a thorough-going adoption of the natural right of might. Though it is stated in the *Gorgias*, this view is not ascribed by Plato to Gorgias himself (who, as we have seen, had taught no ethical or political doctrine, and to whom no such doctrine is assigned by Plato), but to a certain Callicles, who may well have been—though we have no other mention of his existence—an actual and historical person of the later fifth century.[1] Callicles rejects all law as the mere product of contracts, or *συνθήματα* (492 C), made by the weak to defraud the strong of the just right of their might. Law institutes a "slave-morality" (*οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀνδρός . . ἀλλ' ἀνδραπόδου τινός*), and slave-morality is no true morality, for Nature and Law are opposite, and Nature is the true rule of human life (483 B-C). If we follow this rule, as we must, we shall find that morality and right consist in the use of strength to its utmost limits, in order to gain the utility of the pleasure it can give, and to gain it more abundantly than the weak ever can (*πλεονεκτεῖν*). Inequality is thus the rule of Nature. It is only by convention that equality exists, or that men claim an equality of distribution (*ἰσονομία*): by nature men are unequal, and the stronger gets more than the weak. The strength of which Callicles is here speaking is not mere physical strength: it is the strength of the faculties both of body and of mind, or, in a word, of the whole personality. It is the *virtù*, of which Machiavelli wrote, and which he ascribed to Cesare Borgia: it consists (491 B, D) in force of will (*ἀνδρεία*) backed by intellect (*φρόνησις*). If once the man of *virtù*, or, as a Nietzschian would say, the Superman, arises in his strength, he will fling aside the domination of the herd and the rules of its herd-morality; and in him the justice of Nature will stand revealed in perfection (484 A).

> Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
> Devised at first to keep the strong in awe;
> Our strong arms be our conscience.

It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the affinities[2] between this old Greek doctrine of 'the will to power' and the teaching of Nietzsche. It was Nietzsche who said—but Callicles might equally well have said—that "the criterion of truth lies in the enhancement

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 121: Kriegbaum, *Der Ursprung der von Kallikles in Platons Gorgias vertretenen Anschauungen*, p. 42.

[2] The affinities do not, of course, preclude a considerable difference. Nietzsche, an aphorist rather than a theorist, writes from an æsthetic point of view which is entirely alien from that of Callicles.

of the feeling of power". Like Nietzsche, Callicles is not so much an iconoclast of morals as a moral revolutionary. He does not fling aside morality: he flings aside a conventional or herd-morality to make way for a natural or master-morality. He holds that there is such a thing as natural Right, but he holds that its basis is Might.

A further and still more extreme position is represented by Plato, in the first book of the *Republic*, as having been held by Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, a Sophist of the later fifth century. In the view of Thrasymachus there is no such thing at all as natural Right. Right is simply whatever is enforced by the strongest power in the State in accordance with its own view of its own interests. It does not matter what it enforces, whether the right of the strong or the right of the weak, whether inequality or equality: whatever it enforces is right. Thrasymachus does not hold that might is fundamentally right by nature's ordinance: he holds that right is nothing more than the enactment of might, wherever might may reside in any given State, and whatever its enactment may be. If the weak make laws in their interest, or in accordance with their conception of their interest, those laws, and the right they establish, are just and right so long as the weak can enforce them, and they cease to be right so soon as they cannot be so enforced. While Callicles is something of an idealist, believing in a natural right which is always right, Thrasymachus is thus an empiricist, who believes that there is no such thing as a single and permanent right. His affinities are with Hobbes rather than with Nietzsche; and like Hobbes he believes that the only right is the enactment of the sovereign power. This, it has been said,[1] is ethical nihilism. It is the logical complement in the sphere of morality to the intellectual nihilism of Gorgias, though it is a complement that was absent in Gorgias' own teaching. As Gorgias holds that you could not know Being, so Thrasymachus holds that you cannot know right: as Gorgias, by implication, throws you back on the 'appearances' of things, so Thrasymachus explicitly throws you back on the appearances or enactments (τὰ δοκοῦντα) of the different laws enforced by different sovereigns.

Behind these theories there lie historical facts which are necessary for their explanation, and without which they could hardly have come into existence. This is well illustrated by the argument of Callicles in the *Gorgias*. Callicles, as we have seen, believes that inequality and the rule of the strong are the dictates of natural Law. If we ask for his proofs, we shall find that they are two. One is the example of brute creation (τὰ ἄλλα ζῷα : 483 D), or, in other words, the argument from the animal world. This is the argument which Plato himself uses, but in a very different way, in the *Republic*; and it is an argument which seems often to have been used at Athens,

[1] Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

in the sense in which it is used by Callicles, to justify the doctrine that Might is Right. In the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, for instance (a play in which the teaching of the radical Sophists is pilloried), Strepsiades is represented as striking his father, and justifying his action by the remark: "Look at cocks and other such animals—they punish their fathers; and how do they differ from us—except that they don't make Acts of Parliament?" Used in this sense, the argument may remind us of modern arguments for the rule of force drawn from the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest in the animal world. The *apache* who calls himself a 'strugforlifeur' has his ancient prototype; and Callicles may be regarded as using in advance the doctrine of 'tiger-rights'—to borrow Huxley's term—which many modern thinkers have also used, but which is fundamentally inapplicable to the world of human life.[1] But this is not the chief argument of Callicles. The real ground for his conception of Nature is the conduct of States when they are acting as States (ἐν ὅλαις ταῖς πόλεσι: 483 D), just as the ground which Hobbes alleges for his conception of a savage state of Nature is the fact that States are always "in the state and posture of gladiators".

Whether an argument can fairly be drawn from the relations of States to the relations of individuals is too large a question to be treated here. Such an argument differs from the argument drawn from the animal world, in that it is a transference of the observed rule of one department of human life to another department; but it is permissible to hold that there is a fundamental difference between the two departments, and that it is not fair to argue from one to the other, or, at any rate, that if the argument is used, it should be used in the reverse direction. Be that as it may, it is important to notice that the philosophy of might, as it appeared in Greece, seems to have rested largely on political facts, and especially on the political fact of the Athenian Empire. Athens, the head of that Empire, was conceived as a tyrant, who in virtue of her strength imposed her will and her interest, as the canon of right, on all the other members of the Empire; and it was argued that the individual was entitled to follow the example of the city. Tyranny, indeed, in all its forms—whether that of the individual tyrant, or that of the tyrant city—seems to have had at once an attraction and a repulsion for the Greeks; and 'the tyrannical life' appears sometimes as the basest, and sometimes—as it does to Callicles—as the best. The individual tyrant had his charm for Euripides, as we may see from the *Hercules Furens*;[2]

[1] "Nature . . . knows no rights that *ought* to be: her rights are simply the powers which each of her creatures actually uses for its assertion of itself in struggle. . . . Her 'laws' are simply statements of cruel facts: her rights are simply brutal powers. . . . No . . . rights exist in such a sphere; and any notion of moral rights must be set aside as irrelevant" (*Political Thought from Herbert Spencer to To-day*, p. 134).

[2] *Cf.* also the *Phœnissæ*, lines 504-10, and the *Supplices*, lines 409-25. Euripides is perhaps only stating a case, as he often does, with a barrister's zest. But he had

nor can one but feel that behind the philosophy of might represented in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* there stands, as Plato indeed expressly indicates, the figure of the tyrant, the Superman possessed of *virtù*, who, being the stronger, makes his might the standard of right. But even more influential, perhaps, than the figure of the individual tyrant was the fact of the tyrant city. Again and again it is emphasised by Thucydides that the basis of the Athenian Empire is the right of the strong to rule the weak. "It was always an established thing that the inferior should be kept under control by the more capable," the Athenian ambassadors say to the Spartans in the negotiations that precede the Peloponnesian War. The leaders of the Athenians talk in the same strain in the Assembly. "Your Empire is like a tyranny," says Pericles in 430—"a tyranny," adds Cleon in 427, "based on your own strength rather than the good will of your subjects". Most famous, and most striking of all, is the language of the Athenian envoys to the people of Melos, an island nominally included in the Empire since 425, and attacked by the Athenians for failure to pay its tribute in 416. "You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must. . . . Of the gods we believe by tradition, and of men we know for a fact, that by an irresistible law of Nature they rule wherever they can."[1]

These are the sentiments put by Thucydides into the mouths of official Athenians, whether envoys or domestic politicians, whose speeches he professes to report. It may be that he is writing more as a philosopher than as a historian, and that he makes his figures explicitly profess the principles which underlay their action—principles which they themselves perhaps veiled, after the manner of politicians, in a discreet cloud of respectable words. But there can be little doubt that in oligarchical quarters, and especially in oligarchical clubs, the government of the Empire by Athens—and, we may add, the government of Athens itself by the democracy—was denounced *ore rotundo* as merely based on power. Oligarchical circles at Athens professed a sympathy with the allies against the tyrant city, and they regarded the democratic government of that city as a species of mass-selfishness, which issued in the promotion of the interest of the combined masses by heavy taxation of the rich and rich endowment of the poor. Nor did the oligarchically inclined Athenians, who detected at the basis of democracy the doctrine that Might is Right, necessarily reject that doctrine themselves. What they disliked was less the doctrine than its application; and if ever

lived at the Macedonian court; and Plato certainly accuses the tragedians of a sympathy with tyranny.

[1] Thucydides, I. 76: II. 63: III. 37: V. 89 and 105. The references are collected in Kriegbaum's useful pamphlet before quoted, pp. 67 *sqq*.

they had their day, Alcibiades and his friends were probably ready to apply it themselves, in the opposite way. It was, indeed, the affinity between oligarchical opinion and the teaching of the radical Sophists which brought the Sophists into such disfavour with the Athenian populace. Already suspect because they imparted to the rich an eloquence and a political ability which the poor could not afford to buy, they became doubly suspect when some of their number were felt to be giving a philosophic expression to the current opinion of oligarchical clubs.[1]

General Iconoclasm

The tendency to oppose Nature to Law not only resulted in views subversive of the State, but also in opinions destructive of many institutions and beliefs. Once oppose Nature to Convention, and the whole inherited tradition of the ages goes by the board. Various things may be proposed as substitutes; for Nature may be interpreted in various senses. It is constant only as a negative, and in *not* being what Convention is: it is inconstant, and indeed inconsistent, as a positive, and it may be used sometimes to condone master-morality, and sometimes, in the opposite sense, to condemn slavery. That it should be used to undermine religion, and to turn the gods into creatures of convention, was an easy and natural step. Prodicus taught that the first gods to be worshipped were man's personifications of Nature's forces: Diagoras the 'atheist' attacked the gods in a set treatise: Critias spoke in the *Sisyphus* of the gods as the invention of wise men, for the better security of social life, since the fear of the gods stopped the secret imagining of evil, as the laws which wise men had equally instituted stopped its overt manifestation. Slavery too was condemned, as we may learn from the verse of Euripides:—

The name alone brings shame upon the slave;[2]

and the Sophist Alcidamas in the fourth century re-echoed the condemnation, when he maintained that no man was by nature a slave. The difference between a noble and a non-noble class was pronounced as artificial as the difference between freeman and slave. Euripides writes:—

The honest man is Nature's nobleman;[3]

and Lycophron is said by Aristotle to have denied the reality of any distinction of birth—just as, we are told in the *Politics*, he spoke of law as merely conventional, and as simply "a guarantor of the rights

[1] The suggestion that the practice and doctrine of the 'super-state' contributed to the doctrine of the Superman cannot, of course, be applied to Nietzsche. Nietzsche, if he believed in the Superman, disliked the aggressive State and its militarism, and believed in a united States of Europe.

[2] *Ion*. 854-6.

[3] *Fragm*. 345 (Dindorf).

of men against one another" But criticism went still further. Not only did it attack the apex and the basis of Greek society, the noble and the slave, as both unnatural: it also laid hands on such institutions of everyday life as the family.[1] The position of women is a problem that occupies Euripides. In the *Medea* he makes his heroine complain of the lot of women as compared with that of men: she would rather fight in battle thrice than suffer the pains of labour once. In a fragment of the Protesilaus he advocates community of wives.[2] Aristophanes, who in the *Clouds* satirises sophistic teaching in the person of the Unjust Argument, makes merry with the idea of a parliament of women in the *Ecclesiazusae*. It is obvious that there was contemporary discussion with regard to the emancipation of women; and the Platonic solution which lies in communism, and in giving to women the same work as to men, seems to have been already anticipated. Indeed the *Republic* is indebted generally to all the seething of opinion which characterised the end of the fifth century at Athens. If Plato attempted to remodel the Greek conceptions of religion, he had his forerunners here. If he attempted to reconstruct the system of social classes, and to create a new aristocracy of philosophers, there were others before him who had attacked the existence of a nobility of birth. If he sought to remodel society by the abolition of the family, he had his precursors in this field too, as we learn from Euripides. The collectivism (if it

[1] Probably comparative anthropology furnished something of a basis here: the different customs of marriage and property would be particularly striking. Aristotle in the *Politics* (Bk. II) refers to Libyan customs of marriage, and to the practices of "some of the barbaric tribes" in respect of property.

[2] *Medea*, 230 *sqq.*; *Fragm.* 655. Euripides, who had something of a 'Sophist's' mind and outlook, let his mind play readily on all the debated questions of social and political life which were current in his day, and introduced into his verse many of the current views on either side. Mention has already been made of his interest in the problem of tyranny. He cannot be said to be a partisan either of tyranny or of democracy: he loves rather to present the arguments for both, as he does, for instance, in the passage in the *Supplices* (399-455) in which the Theban herald, as the representative of Creon, defends the cause of tyranny against Theseus, the traditional founder of Athenian democracy. In one passage in which he defends the cause of democracy (*Phœnissæ*, 538-51; *cf.* *Supplices*, 406-8), he alleges, as we have seen, the analogy of the natural world, so often pressed into service on the other side, as an argument in favour of democratic equality. "Night and day interchange equally on their yearly course, each yielding place to the other: so should there be equality and interchange of office in the State." As far as Euripides has any preference of his own, it would seem to be for a moderate constitution, in which the middle classes are supreme. "Of the three classes it is the middle which saves cities, guarding the order which they may enact" (*Supplices*, 244-5). Further, he has an admiration for the country-farmer, whom he perhaps regarded as the back-bone of the middle class; and in the *Orestes* (917-22) he speaks of him as one "who rarely frequents the city and the market-square—a worker with his own hands, of the sort that alone preserves the land—shrewd, and ready to come to close quarters in debate, but unsophisticated, and a man of blameless life". In thus praising the middle class and the country-farmer, Euripides is probably representing current commonplaces of his time, and voicing the opinions of the moderate party at Athens to which Theramenes belonged. Aristotle borrows these commonplaces, which had perhaps left their mark in the pamphlet literature of Athens, and incorporates them in the *Politics*—more especially in Book VI.

may be so called) of his politics is a natural reaction from previous individualism; and the philosopher-king is the 'strong man' adopted, educated, and transmuted. The *Republic* did not spring at once to life, self-begotten in Plato's brain; it had its prelude and its preparation in previous thought. And if we find Plato in constant antagonism to his precursors, let us not forget his indebtedness. Not only did they furnish him with a starting point and a stimulus: they gave him also some of the materials which he used.

It is difficult to attempt any general view of the teaching and tendency of the Sophists. It is a long way from Protagoras to Thrasymachus; and it is difficult to comprehend the two in any formula. We have to distinguish the early generation represented by Protagoras, with its conservative trend, from the later generation represented by Callicles and Thrasymachus—a generation which we only know from Plato and the new fragment of Antiphon, but which, we may gather, had become revolutionary in its tenets. The Sophists of both generations figure largely in the Platonic dialogues; and both by way of attraction and by way of repulsion Plato was greatly influenced by their teaching. On the whole, however, his verdict upon them is unfavourable. It is true that he can do justice to Protagoras, and that he speaks with some respect of Gorgias; but it is eloquence rather than argument, and conventionality rather than originality, which he assigns even to the older Sophists. Generally, however, his attention is concentrated on the radical school which had divorced nature and convention; and in the *Gorgias*, the *Republic*, and the tenth book of the *Laws*, he insists on the error of that divorce, and the fatal practical consequences to which it leads. For truth is to be found, and justice is to be attained, not by any facile antithesis of nature and convention, but by discovering in conventions, through philosophic training and insight, the eternal 'ideas' which are implicit in them, and by elevating and ennobling conventions in the light of those 'ideas'.

Pamphleteers and Utopians

Whatever the divergencies of view among the Sophists, they were all at one in turning from Nature to man. Protagoras and Gorgias, as we have seen, made the transition easy, the latter by showing the impossibility of the old physical conceptions, the former by emphasising the truth and the value of the measurements of human sense; and following in their steps, many Sophists had pursued the study of man in all the manifestations of his activity—in his politics, in his law, in his language. For the future, the study of "human things" was to be the channel in which thought would flow. That thought could not but be pre-eminently political. Man was too much tied to the State for a pure discussion of individual ethics: any

philosophy of human action must be largely a 'political' philosophy. In the struggle of contemporary parties, again, questions would constantly arise, which called for an answer, and made political thought a pressing and practical thing. The busy study of politics moved in various directions. It was partly historical; and here political thought clothed itself in historical narrations or disquisitions. It was partly ideal; and men imagined Utopias which did not seem visionary. Finally in the mind of a Socrates, it was something of a reformation—a matter of prophesying and a theme for preaching.

In its historical aspect, political thought appears in various forms. It appears in the set history of Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus reflects on varieties of custom: he compares the merits of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Thucydides gives us the philosophy of Greek *στάσις*: in the speeches, where he gives free rein to political reflection, he makes Pericles sketch the picture of an ideal Athens, or Athenagoras of Syracuse defend the principles of popular government, or the Athenian envoys at Melos disclose the principles which underlay the government of their Empire. But the political pamphlet concerns us more closely than history; and many political pamphlets were written at Athens towards the end of the fifth century.[1] The first of these was written by a *littérateur* from Thasos, Stesimbrotus, who composed, soon after 430 B.C., a work which dealt with Themistocles, Thucydides the statesman (the son of Melesias), and Pericles—a work which some have regarded as an attempt to estimate Athenian democracy by its greatest statesmen, and others have viewed as a mere collection of political scandals. There is still preserved a treatise on the Athenian Constitution, once attributed —but erroneously—to Xenophon. It is a treatise written, perhaps about 425 B.C., by a member of the oligarchical party, who criticises what he describes, and yet seeks to understand what he criticises. The characteristics of Athenian democracy are shown to flow from the principle of freedom which it has adopted; and a close connection is also drawn between sea-power and democracy. The extent to which the 'old oligarch' has made general principles inform his record of details has caused his treatise to be called "the earliest model of the deductive method as applied to society and politics".[2] Yet another pamphlet on the Athenian Constitution, written from a different point of view, has been conjecturally attributed to Theramenes the trimmer; and it has been suggested that the Aristotelian treatise on the Constitution of Athens which we possess was based on this pamphlet, which, if it ever existed, is now lost. In it Athenian democracy was discussed in the light of its leading statesmen; and

[1] For an account of these *cf.* Wilamowitz, *Aristoteles und Athen*, I. 161 *sqq.*, and Drerup, ['Ηρώδου] *περὶ πολιτείας*, pp. 110 *sqq.*

[2] Gomperz (after Scholl), *Greek Thinkers*, I. 500. On the argument of the treatise, *cf. infra*, pp. 257 n. 1, and 317 n. 1.

from their history it was argued that Athens would do well to substitute a moderate constitution for the extreme democracy which the Periclean age had produced. This form of constitution the author endeavoured to identify with the old 'ancestral' constitution of Solonian times; and Aristotle may have been helped by his arguments to form that preference for a moderate democracy (or 'polity') which he shows in the *Politics.*[1]

It is possible—though it is wise to suspend judgment, and even to entertain a certain amount of sane scepticism, about the bold conjectures of German critics, which rest on very exiguous grounds—that the last quarter of the fifth century at Athens was a time of busy pamphleteering of all kinds, and that some traces of this activity may be detected in the writings of antiquity which we still possess. Antiphon, the real leader of the revolution of 411, who at his trial delivered a fine speech (now lost) in his own defence, *may* have been the writer of pamphlets on Concord and Statesmanship, in which he vindicated his principles; but since the only ancient evidence we possess ascribes these treatises to the other Antiphon, the Sophist, speculation seems idle; and to seek, as some have done, for traces of these lost works in the works of other writers which we possess (as, for instance, in the plays of Euripides) seems doubly idle. The so-called *Anonymus Iamblichi*—a writer supposed to belong to the later fifth century, whose work has been detected in the pages of Iamblichus, a late neo-Platonist author—has by some been identified with Antiphon the Sophist (though on what grounds it is difficult to see),[2] and his work has been supposed to be a pamphlet in favour of *εὐνομία*. Whoever he was, and whenever he wrote, he has some curious references to the Superman ("a man invulnerable in body, free from disease and the play of passion, mighty of bulk and hard as adamant in body and mind"); but he holds that the rest of society will be an adequate match for him, in virtue of their obedience to law and the strength that it gives, and he believes that strength can only remain strong by means of the law and in virtue of justice. Finally, it has been conjectured that the short speech *περὶ πολιτείας*, traditionally attributed to Herodes Atticus, an orator of the second century A.D., and supposed to be an oratorical exercise on a theme taken from classical Greek history, was really a political pamphlet couched in rhetorical form, written by an unknown author between July and August, 404 B.C. (the date is precise), and, though nominally addressed to the people of Larissa to advocate an alliance

[1] Critias, one of the Thirty Tyrants, who did Theramenes to death, was also a political writer. He is said to have written, in prose and verse, treating of the inventions of various lands for the comfort of life (*cf.* Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, I. 175), and also to have composed accounts of the constitutions of Sparta and Thessaly.

[2] The recently discovered fragment of the Sophist Antiphon *περὶ ἀληθείας* has now entirely disproved this identification, and corroborated the suspicions expressed in the text. Antiphon's views are almost the opposite of those of the *Anonymus Iamblichi.*

with Sparta and a change of their constitution in the direction of moderate oligarchy, really intended for the people of Athens. It is true that the description in the speech of the horrors of στάσις ("as much worse than war as war is than peace"), and the account which it gives of oligarchy, are both interesting; but a later writer, familiar with early authors, and composing an oratorical exercise, may well have borrowed both. All that we are entitled to say is that speeches *may* have been written at Athens in the last quarter of the fifth century on general political themes, and they *may* have been circulated as pamphlets (as were the speeches of Isocrates at a later date); but if they were, they are lost, and we are necessarily ignorant of their nature, and still more of their content. The only pamphlet of which we can be certain is that of the pseudo-Xenophon on the Constitution of Athens.

Alongside of histories and pamphlets recording or judging the present or the past came also attempts to sketch the lines of the future. Not only did men attempt to elicit political ideas from existing constitutions: they also tried to embody political ideas in pictures of ideal constitutions. Such pictures were a natural result both of the tendencies of thought and of the practical needs of the hour. The attack on things conventional, and the praise of things natural, inevitably led to the suggestion of ideal States possessed of 'natural' institutions. The anthropology, which may have helped to produce the attacks on institutions like the family, may now have served as the basis of positive construction. The first ideal States would naturally be based on travellers' accounts of Nature-peoples; and even in Plato's *Republic* some traces of this basis may be seen. The practical problem of colonisation made these sketches less visionary than they would otherwise have been. The great age of colonisation was indeed past: the boundless field for political experiment which had been presented by the incessant foundation of new communities was by this time restricted. Yet there were still cases of colonisation, and there was still room for experiment; and in 444 we find Protagoras acting as legislator for the Athenian colony at Thurii.

The dramatist Cratinus first sketched an ideal State in a comedy called the Πλοῦτοι; but the two chief writers of Utopias were Phaleas and Hippodamus, who both belong to the end of the fifth century.[1] Their views are recorded by Aristotle in some detail, in the second book of the *Politics*. Phaleas of Chalcedon started, we are told, from a conviction that it was economic troubles which led to civil dissension; and he accordingly proposed the equalisation of property in land. In the foundation of colonies, he thought, this

[1] Phaleas' date is unknown, but he would seem to have been an older contemporary of Plato (*cf.* Newman, II. 283), and a little later than Hippodamus (Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, E.T., I. 578).

could readily be secured: in an old State, it might be effected by the regulation of dowries. The rich might give dowries, but should not receive them: the poor might receive dowries, but should not give them. The proposal may remind us of Mill, who similarly proposed to remedy the inequalities of property, by limiting the amount "which any one should be permitted to acquire by bequest or inheritance".[1] But Phaleas not only proposed the equalisation of property: he was anxious that there should also be equality of access for every citizen to a uniform education. A further feature of his scheme was that he wished to make all the artisans public slaves, possibly in order to increase the revenues of the State, but more probably in order to prevent the competition of men, who had acquired different degrees of wealth by industry, with a peasantry settled on equal holdings.[2]

A more ambitious scheme was propounded by Hippodamus, a native of Miletus who had settled in Athens. He was a man of some pretensions, as we learn from Aristotle. An innovator in architecture, he was the author of the plan for cutting cities into square blocks by a system of intersecting roads. He sought for effect in his personal appearance: he wore his hair long and set with ornaments: his clothing, made of cheap material but warm texture, served him in winter and summer alike. He was a man of learning in physics; and it accords with his somewhat pretentious temper that he should have been "the first man who was not a politician who tried to describe an ideal State". He anticipated Plato in his division of the State into three classes: he differed from Plato in that his three classes consisted of artisans, farmers, and warriors, while Plato's were formed of a single producing class, a class of warriors, and a class of philosophic rulers. Possibly there is some imitation of Egyptian castes in Hippodamus' plan: possibly, as his use of the number three suggests, he was under Pythagorean influences. As he divided the citizens into three classes, so he divided the land into three portions—one sacred, and reserved for religious purposes; one public, and assigned to the use of the warriors; a third private, and left to the farming class. That he should have made the land which supplied the needs of the soldiers public property again reminds us of Plato's scheme—though Plato pursued a different plan, and, assigning all the land to the producing class, imposed on it a tribute in kind which the soldiers and rulers consumed in common. Both in suggesting a special fighting class, and in making its property the property of the State, Hippodamus may be said to have aimed at instituting a reformed government, exempt from the vices of the times—a government freed from

[1] *Political Economy*, II, II. § 4. A similar proposal to that of Mill is made by Aristotle (1309, a 24): in an oligarchy whose preservation is desired, property should be transmitted by inheritance, not by will or gift, and one man should only receive one inheritance.

[2] Newman's edition of the *Politics*, II. 294.

political incapacity by specialisation, and from political corruption by communism. But in one respect he did not depart from Athens. The three classes of his ideal State in conjunction formed 'the people,' and the people elected its rulers. Here Hippodamus differs widely from Plato, who leaves nothing to the people, and proposes that the producing and fighting classes shall be governed by a class in whose appointment they have no part. The laws, like the citizens and the land, Hippodamus divided into three classes, according as they dealt with offences against honour, or property, or life; and he similarly distinguished the administration by the three subjects of its action—public matters, matters relating to resident aliens, and matters concerning foreigners. He advocated the institution of a Supreme Court of Appeal, composed of a number of the older citizens appointed by public election. Finally, he proposed rewards for men who found out inventions which were of service to the common weal.[1]

[1] Aristotle's criticism of this last suggestion comes in Book II, c. viii, §§ 16–25, of the *Politics*. He criticises Hippodamus' division of the State into three classes on the ground that the soldiers will always be the most powerful section, and will always control the government, in spite of the 'people's' rights of election. He argues that there is no necessity for a separate farming class, as the artisans will live by their industry, and the soldiers already have lands of their own. He raises the question of the cultivation of the common land: if the soldiers cultivate it, they will not have time to be soldiers; if the farming class, they will be overburdened with work; if a class separate from either, then there will be four classes in the State.

Appendix

TWO FRAGMENTS FROM THE TREATISE OF THE SOPHIST ANTIPHON "ON TRUTH"

JUSTICE [in the ordinary view] consists in not transgressing [or rather, in not being known to transgress] any of the legal rules (νόμιμα) of the State in which one lives as a citizen. A man, therefore, would practise justice in the way most advantageous to himself if, in the presence of witnesses, he held the laws in high esteem, but, in the absence of witnesses, and when he was by himself, he held in high esteem the rules of nature (τὰ τῆς φύσεως). The reason is that the rules of the laws (τὰ τῶν νόμων) are adventitious,[1] while the rules of nature are inevitable [and innate]; and again that the rules of the laws are created by covenant (ὁμολογηθέντα) and not produced by nature (φύντα), while the rules of nature are exactly the reverse. A man, therefore, who transgresses legal rules, is free from shame and punishment whenever he is unobserved[2] by those who made the covenant, and is subject to shame and punishment only when he is observed. It is otherwise with transgression of the rules which are innate in nature. If a man strains any of these rules beyond what it can bear, the evil consequences are none the less, if he is entirely unobserved, and none the greater, if he is seen of all men; and this is because the injury which he incurs is not due to men's opinion (διὰ δόξαν), but to the facts of the case (δι' ἀλήθειαν).[3]

The question with which we are here concerned arises from every point of view (πάντων ἕνεκα). Most of the things which are legally just are [none the less] in the position of being inimical to nature. By law it has been laid down for the eyes what they should see and what they should not see; for the ears what they should hear, and what they should not hear; for the tongue what it should speak, and what it should not speak; for the hands what they should do, and what they should not do; for the feet whither they should go, and whither they should not go; and for the mind what it should desire, and what it should not desire. Now the

[1] ἐπιθέτα—a word which implies imposition *ab extra*, and suggests something factitious. It is even used, in later Greek writers, in the sense of "fictitious," and in opposition to ἀληθινός.

[2] Plato, in the beginning of the *Republic*, and especially at the beginning of the second book, is occupied with the same point—whether it is worth a man's while to practise justice when he is unobserved. If one had Gyges' ring, which had the power of making its owner invisible, would justice pay? (*Rep.*, 359-61).

[3] To transgress the rules of health, for instance (we may suppose the writer to mean), brings an inevitable reaction which proceeds inexorably from the facts of the case. To transgress a rule against perjury produces no inevitable reaction: only if one is observed is there any reaction, and then it is only a reaction of opinion.

things from which the laws seek to turn men away are no more [? less] agreeable or akin to Nature than the things which the laws seek to turn men towards. [This may be proved as follows.] To nature belong both life and death. Men draw life from the things that are advantageous to them: they incur death from the things that are disadvantageous to them. But the things which are established as advantageous in the view of the law are restraints on nature [*i.e.* they prevent men from drawing life, which belongs to nature, from the things that are really advantageous to them], whereas the things established by nature as advantageous are free [*i.e.* they leave men free to draw life from the things that are really advantageous to them; for they are identical with those things].[1] Therefore things which cause pain [and so are akin to death] do not, on a right view, benefit nature[2] more [on the contrary, they benefit nature less] than things which cause pleasure [and so are akin to life]; and therefore, again, things which cause suffering would not be more advantageous [on the contrary, they would be less advantageous] than things which cause happiness—for things which are really (τῷ ἀληθεῖ) advantageous ought not to cause detriment, but gain. . . .[3] [Take the case of those] who only retaliate after suffering injury, and are never themselves the aggressors; or those who behave well to their parents, though their parents behave badly to them; or those, again, who allow others to prefer charges

[1] The argument at this point is not clearly stated. Roughly it seems to mean that life and death are natural processes, and that the one process results from what is naturally advantageous to the human body, and the other from what is naturally disadvantageous. The law, by giving another and an artificial definition of "advantageous" and "disadvantageous," and by seeking to enforce that definition, interferes with the free working of these processes.

[2] They do not benefit nature, since they do not promote or benefit life, which belongs to nature.

[3] The argument appears to be in favour of simple hedonism, but it is obscurely expressed. It may perhaps be stated as follows: "By nature men desire life, and by nature therefore they desire the things which are advantageous to life. Pleasant things are advantageous to life, and so by nature men desire pleasant things. But the natural is also the real. Therefore pleasure, being naturally advantageous—since it is advantageous to life, which is naturally desirable—is really advantageous. The law, however, does not proceed in this way. It declares things not to be advantageous which by nature, and really, are advantageous: it declares, for instance, a theft by a starving man not to be advantageous, whereas really such a theft is advantageous, since it helps the man to live. Again, conversely, the law declares things to be advantageous which by nature, and really, are not advantageous: it declares, for instance, a starving man's abstinence from theft to be advantageous, though such abstinence, causing as it does the man's detriment, is really disadvantageous." The argument is a fallacy, because it isolates the individual. If an individual existed absolutely by himself, it might be advantageous for him to steal; but there would be nobody from whom he could steal. But if he exists, as he does, in society, and as a member of society, nothing can in the long run be really disadvantageous to him, which is socially advantageous. If it is socially advantageous that there should be property and respect for property, then no member of society really loses, or suffers detriment, by respecting the property of others. If a man respects the property of others, others will respect *his* property: and if at the moment he has no property, that does not prevent the possibility of his having property in the future. Rights and duties are correlative, and the one implies the other. The assumption of "invisibility"—that is to say, of going unobserved in a failure to respect rights—does not vitiate this argument; for it is an assumption that cannot be made. Social man, whose life is lived in the presence of his fellows, is not "invisible"; and the more society perfects its mechanism—not only of police, but also of communication—the more do all its members live in glass houses.

[against them] on oath, and bring no such charges themselves. Of the actions here mentioned one would find many to be inimical to nature. They involve more suffering when less is possible, less pleasure when more is possible, and injury when freedom from injury is possible.

[The writer now attacks legal justice from another point of view. Hitherto he has attacked law and its presumptions: now he attacks law-courts and their operation. Hitherto he has argued that law makes wrong what is right; now he argues that the machinery of the law cannot carry its own false presumptions into effect.] Now if those who adopted such courses received any help from the laws, or those who did not adopt such courses, but took the opposite line, suffered any loss from the laws, there would be some use in paying obedience to the laws. But, as a matter of fact, it is obvious that legal justice is inadequate to help those who adopt such courses. In the beginning [*i.e.* before any legal cognisance can be taken of the facts] it permits the injured party to be injured and the offending party to commit his offence. But it is not only that legal justice is in no position, at this point, to prevent the injured party from being injured, or the offending party from committing his offence. There is more. If we consider the action of legal justice in reference to retribution [which at any rate it professes to give] we find that such justice is no more favourable to the injured than it is to the offending party. [The remaining lines of the fragment are mutilated; but they seem to mean that, when a case comes before a court for trial, the injured party is in no better a position, and may be in a worse position, than the offending. He can only affirm the fact of injury, and endeavour to persuade the court of the fact. The injured party can deny the fact, and seek to persuade the court of the truth of his denial. What finally determines the court is the greater ability of one or other of the parties; and there is no guarantee that the greater ability will be found on the side of the injured party.[1]]

II

[Those who are born of a great house] we revere and venerate: those who are born of a humble house we neither revere nor venerate. On this point we are [not civilised, but] barbarised in our behaviour to one another. Our natural endowment is the same for us all, on all points, whether we are Greeks or barbarians.[2] We may observe the characteristics of any of the powers which by nature are necessary to all men. . . . None of us is set apart [by any peculiarity of such natural powers] either as a Greek or as a barbarian. We all breathe the air through our mouth and nostrils.

[1] If this is the sense of the passage, we have to remember that the courts at Athens were large popular courts, in which rhetorical skill, and the ability to present a case in a persuasive way ("to make the worse cause appear the better"), counted for a great deal.

[2] Compare St. Paul's repeated assertion that in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free". The argument which follows in the text is that which Shakespeare makes Shylock use.

CHAPTER V

SOCRATES AND THE MINOR SOCRATICS

The Life of Socrates

FROM these reformers we now may turn to study the great figure of Socrates. Unlike the thinkers with whom we have hitherto been concerned, who were all foreigners who had settled in Athens because Athens was practically the metropolis of Greece, Socrates was a full Athenian citizen.[1] He was born about 470, and met his death in 399; his youth was thus passed in the great Periclean age, and his declining years among the troubles of the Peloponnesian War. He took a full share in the ordinary civic duties of the day. He fought as a hoplite, or heavy-armed soldier, in the Athenian campaigns in Thrace, and he was again engaged in 424, when his steady behaviour won him admiration, at the battle of Delium. At the age of sixty-five he became a member of the Council; and he was a member of the Committee of Council which was presiding in the Assembly on the day on which nine of the Athenian generals were condemned in a body, by a single vote, for their failure to rescue drowning sailors at the naval battle of Arginusae (405). Such a condemnation *en masse* was contrary to a rule of the constitution, and Socrates, alone among all the members of the Committee, refused to concur in putting to the Assembly such an unconstitutional vote.[2] A year later, when the Thirty Tyrants were exercising a reign of terror in Athens, he was ordered, with four other citizens, to arrest and bring for execution a citizen whom they had proscribed; and once more he refused to concur in what he regarded as an illegal order. A steady discharge of civic duty, and a steady refusal to go outside the bounds of civic law, are thus the two features which mark his life as an Athenian citizen.

He was the son of a sculptor (and an Athenian sculptor, we

[1] Archelaus of Athens was the first Athenian citizen to turn to philosophy. Socrates had been his disciple, and he may have succeeded him as the head of the school which he had founded.

[2] According to some accounts, Socrates was not only a member of the presiding Committee of Council, but was also the president for the day (ἐπιστάτης) of that Committee, and as such president for the day of the Assembly. If this was the case, it fell to Socrates personally to put the vote, and he took the personal responsibility of refusing to do so,

must remember, was a craftsman like the mason or potter); and he had learned his father's craft. Here again he appears as a typical citizen of Athens. But he devoted his life to the study of philosophy, and he consorted with all the thinkers who made Athens their home in the second half of the fifth century. At first, and down to about 435, he was interested in the physical science of the day. He seems to have studied most of the prevalent theories. He found that they only gave a mechanical explanation of *how* things were made; and what he wanted was a teleological explanation, showing *why* they are, and what is their *raison d'être*.[1] In other words, he sought to ascend from natural science, and its occupation with matter, to genuine philosophy in the sense of an inquiry into the purpose or final cause of things. This is an immense step, and when it is taken we have passed at a bound from the world of Anaximander and Heraclitus to the world of Plato and Aristotle. The importance of Socrates lies in the fact that he represents this transition. His own diversion from physical studies to a deeper inquiry was due, according to our authorities, to the voice of the Delphic oracle, of old so important in the general life of Greece, and now once more an influence in the life of one of the greatest of Greek philosophers. Consulted by one of his friends, the oracle pronounced Socrates the wisest of men. Socrates, who had a fund of shrewd common sense combined with a vein of humour, set himself to disprove the oracle by questioning others and proving them by his questions to be wiser men than himself. He succeeded in achieving the opposite of his purpose; for he found that while others were unwise enough to profess to know what they did not know, he himself was wise enough to confess that "he nothing knew save that he nothing knew". Henceforth he gave himself up to a life of service, believing that he had a mission from the Delphic god: he undertook a crusade against sham knowledge, and became the preacher of genuine wisdom.

The Method and Doctrine of Socrates

This account of what may almost be called the 'conversion' of Socrates implies two things. It implies a peculiar method; and it implies a peculiar doctrine. The method is the method of dialectic. In place of the Ionic method of adumbration, in cryptic prose or riddling verse, of results already obtained; in place, again, of the sophistic method of ordered arrangement of topics according to a set scheme in an eloquent discourse, Socrates pursued the method of question and answer, and he pursued it everywhere and among all sorts of men. It was a definite method, as much (we may almost say) as the scholastic method of the Middle Ages: there were rules for the adoption of the theme of discussion, and rules for the relevant answering of questions. It was a method unpleasant for the victim, and a

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 133.

method which might become merely eristic, turning to argument in any direction for the sake of argument; but it was, all the same, in the hands of Socrates, a genuine organ of truth. We know its procedure from the dialogues of Plato, of which, indeed, as the very name of "dialectic" shows, it was the parent. If this was the method of Socrates, his doctrine was what we may call a doctrine of the Two Knowledges. He held that there were two kinds of knowledge, one of which was only apparent and only held at the best by an insecure tenure, while the other was real and a permanent possession of the mind. He held that it was the duty of all men to find true knowledge, and that they could only do so if they "knew themselves"—that is to say, if they knew how much they really knew. He held, too, that true knowledge was also true goodness.

So far as we can ascribe any particular doctrine to Socrates, this was his doctrine. It is obvious that the stress laid by Socrates on the value of true knowledge had its affinities with the emphasis laid by the Sophists on the special knowledge they professed to impart. Not only had the Sophists methodised subjects like rhetoric, and offered to impart a technical knowledge of such subjects; they had made human conduct itself into an art, and professed to be able to give a special knowledge of that art, which would result in 'goodness' or practical ability (ἀρετή), and would enable its possessors to manage States and families rightly. To the Sophists, therefore, as to Socrates, real goodness depended upon and consisted in a special knowledge; nor can we say that the identification of goodness with knowledge is, in itself, a peculiarly Socratic doctrine. On the contrary the Sophists, professing as they did to teach goodness, were committed as deeply as Socrates to the proposition that "goodness is knowledge". If it were not, it would not be teachable; and if it were not teachable, the *raison d'être* of their profession was gone.

To understand the peculiar doctrine of Socrates properly, we must therefore proceed from noting his affinities with the Sophists to trace his fundamental divergence from their views. Here we have first of all to notice that he did not believe, as the Sophists did, that goodness was a special art—or, to speak more exactly, was excellence in a special art—which could only be mastered, like other such arts, by the attainment of a special knowledge peculiar to itself. He did not hold that there was a special art of human conduct, or that goodness was special capacity in the practice of such a special art. He held that goodness was a general capacity, and as such unique. He believed that it put everything else in its true place and proper perspective; he believed that it was architectonic, determining the due proportion and proper relations of each activity and department of life. In a word, there is no art of human conduct parallel to the art of rhetoric, and no goodness in such an

art parallel to excellence in rhetoric; but there is such a thing as goodness, and goodness is a general capacity of the whole soul which issues in a balance and harmony of all its activities.[1] It follows upon this view that the knowledge which is necessary to goodness is not a special and professional knowledge which can only be acquired through special teaching. Socrates did not believe that goodness demanded a new and peculiar and esoteric substance of knowledge which differed in character from the substance of the knowledge of ordinary men. He did not profess to teach men to know the things that belonged to 'nature,' in order that they might reject, in the strength of such knowledge, the things that belonged to 'law'. As a matter of fact, he was a firm believer in law; but there was a deeper reason than that for his refusing to hold that goodness consisted in any new substance of knowledge. That deeper reason is to be found in his conviction that what mattered was not so much what you knew, as the way in which you knew it. He wanted not so much knowledge of new things, as a new way of knowledge of old things—not so much knowledge of a 'nature' different from the ordinary world, as knowledge of the ordinary world itself, raised to a new power, and translated to a new value, by being a knowledge of the reason why that world was as it was. He accepted the morality of convention, but he sought to make it a higher morality, by making men see the reason of its existence and the 'idea' on which it was based. This brings us back to his doctrine of the Two Knowledges, which we can now see in its full bearing. The knowledge men ordinarily possess is not knowledge at all, but opinion (δόξα). They know things in the sense that they have often heard them said; but they do not know them in the only sense in which we are entitled to speak of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη)—they do not know them as the product of a cause, and in relation to the cause by which they are produced. They know, in the sense that they have heard, that they ought to be temperate; but they do not really know it, because they do not know why they ought to be temperate. Here we may see the fundamental reason why Socrates desired a teleological explanation of things. Knowledge was only possible through such an explanation—at any rate knowledge that counted.

If goodness is knowledge, and there are two sorts of knowledge, there will also be two sorts of goodness. This is what Socrates believed. There is the goodness which is based on opinion, and there is the goodness which is based on knowledge. Opinion is insecure; it is liable to be forgotten, or to be changed by some new impression;

[1] One of Socrates' reasons for holding that goodness was not an art was that it had not, like the arts, a δύναμις τῶν ἐναντίων. Rhetoric can help both just and unjust causes; the physician can both cure and kill. Goodness is only capable of one effect, and therefore it is not an art; *cf. infra*, p. 154.

and the goodness which is based on opinion is equally insecure. Knowledge is secure, because it is based on reasoning reference to a cause; and the goodness which is based on knowledge is equally secure. Goodness based on opinion is a matter of habit (ἔθος): goodness based on knowledge is a matter of reasoned conviction and insight (φρόνησις). The one is common goodness: the other is philosophic goodness. But though the two may be set in contrast over against one another, we must not forget that both are forms of goodness. They have both the same content; and the difference consists only in a difference of grasp on that content. As far as its content goes, common goodness is real goodness; and Socrates, as we have seen, never sought to revolutionise that content, or to substitute a new substance of morality. His objection to conventional morality in its ordinary form was not that it was based on wrong principles, but that it lacked any consciousness of the principles on which it was based—principles which he held in themselves to be absolutely true. Because there was no such consciousness, ordinary morality suffered from two defects. Since it came, not from grasp of principle, but from the accident of natural disposition, or the chance of upbringing, it was liable to disappear in a new environment; it was unable to respond to new and unprecedented demands. Again—and this was a still greater defect—it could not be communicated. Goodness which rests on principles admits of some definition of those principles; and one can communicate and teach something which can be embraced in a general definition. Socrates was anxious to attain such definitions; they were the object of his dialectic and cross-questioning; and Aristotle speaks of him as the first to introduce general definitions. It is in this sense that he was a moral teacher. And it was just because he sought to be a moral teacher that he was discontented with the goodness which, resting on no principle and incomprehensible in any definition, could not be taught.

On the whole we may say that both in ethics and in politics Socrates was an intellectualist. Heraclitus had said of old: "I have researched into myself". What Socrates desired was such research, and the expert guidance of life based upon it. He objected, we are told, to the lot, because it made way for incompetence as readily as for competence. He objected to the rule of a sovereign Assembly in which tinker and tailor, cobbler and fuller, had an equal voice in public affairs with those who really understood something of the art of politics. He was even a critic, as we may gather from the *Meno* and the *Gorgias*, of the Athenian statesmen who guided the Assembly. At the best, we learn from the *Meno*, they have a sort of political instinct; but they cannot transmit it to their sons or successors. At the worst, we gather from the *Gorgias*, they are false shepherds, who fill the city with "harbours and docks and walls and revenues,"

seeking popularity by indulging the populace, but forgetting the things which belong to justice and temperance (*infra*, p 140). In opposition to these things, Socrates taught the need of an expert knowledge, based on first principles, for the conduct of political affairs. Here we may see the germ of that doctrine of specialisation which is expounded by Plato in detail in the *Republic*. Among those who are recorded as occasionally attending the discourses of Socrates there were some who followed the career of professional soldiers; and the need of a system of professionalism based on scientific knowledge may be said to have been the gist of discourses which such men would gladly hear. In the cult of professionalism in politics Socrates was at one with the Sophists, though it is obvious, from what we have already seen, that the training which he desired for the profession of politics went further than that of the Sophists, and meant something of a philosophic education issuing in a firm grasp of the fundamental principles of politics. Here, we gather, the analogy of the arts was often used by Socrates. If goodness was not an art, but something higher and more catholic, politics at any rate must be treated as an art, and the politician must be required to undergo training, and to "serve his time," as much as the craftsman. But we must not too readily or too completely assimilate the politician to the craftsman. If the things of justice and temperance belonged to his care, his first requisite, after all, was a true and philosophic notion of goodness. And that, Socrates always taught, was a matter for something more than an art.

Socrates may be described as an intellectualist; but we cannot rest content with that description. In the first place intellect never meant to the Greeks, and least of all to Socrates and his disciple Plato, a dry and cold organ of reason. It was something "touched with emotion"—something which issued, not only in knowledge, but also in a direction of the will and in practical action. To know the truth by reason was to love what one knew: to understand things beautiful, by seeing that they were beautiful because they participated in the eternal Idea or Form of Beauty, was to feel the sovereign attraction of true Beauty, and therefore to ensue things beautiful in action and in conduct. And thus we touch a further point. Intellect must not be divorced from will: the test of knowledge is a proved capacity of action.[1] Conceiving of

[1] The conception of *Glaube* in Luther's writings affords a parallel to which it is perhaps worth while to draw attention. To Luther, "faith was no mere intellectual acceptance of Christ and His atoning death, even if that acceptance were of a strictly personal kind: it was such a spiritual incorporation of the soul with its Saviour as involved a changed individuality, a renewed and strengthened nature, out of which all the fruits of righteousness naturally grew. . . . There is a dynamic force in faith, especially if it be conceived as inseparable from love; but what strength of change and renewal in mere belief?" (Beard, *The Hibbert Lectures* (1883), pp. 131-2). Just as Luther held that faith necessarily involved action, Socrates held that knowledge neces-

intellect in this way, the Greek philosophers sought to act on the world according to their knowledge. They did not regard themselves as discoverers and teachers of intellectual truths, but rather as men who had found a practical gospel, on which they were bound themselves to act and to induce others also to act. Socrates was like all other Greek philosophers in seeking to communicate a way of life. Where he differed was in the wide scope of his effort. Other philosophers had sought to found schools and to teach a circle of regular disciples. It has been suggested that Socrates was at the head of a definite philosophical school, and he certainly seems to have had a regular circle of companions (ἑταῖροι); but his teaching had a range that went far beyond the limits of any school. Unlike the Sophists, who had taught the young nobility, he conversed with his fellow-citizens everywhere, in street or market-place or Assembly, wherever men were gathered together. He talked at large for a general circle of hearers (εἰς τὸ μέσον), as the Greeks loved to do; and he talked without respect of persons. A craftsman himself, he never despised his fellows; and herein he showed himself free from a prejudice from which Plato and even Aristotle are not altogether exempt.

But there is also another point of view, from which we must still further modify any description of Socrates as an intellectualist. If he was an intellectualist, he was also something of a mystic. He preached that men ought to guide their lives by an intelligent grasp of principle; but his own life was often guided by something of a very different kind. We have already seen that it was the voice of the Delphic oracle which converted him to moral philosophy, and that he believed he had been charged with a mission from the Delphic god. We also learn from Plato that he sometimes fell into a trance; and we are told, both by Plato and by Xenophon (though they give different accounts of its nature), that he had a warning voice (τὸ δαιμόνιον), whose guidance he often followed.[1] It has been remarked that the story of the warning voice suggests that there was some defect in Socrates' philosophy of action. And indeed, if we look closely at that philosophy, we shall find that in some ways it does not carry us very far. He preached the sovereignty of true knowledge: he hardly explained the nature of the principles by which true knowledge must act. He certainly made the presence or absence of a rational purpose the criterion of good and evil, and this led him to believe that evil acts, being evil in the absence of a purpose, were involuntary, and no man, therefore, was voluntarily

sarily involved conduct; and hence he believed that it was impossible to know the right and *voluntarily* to do the wrong.

[1] According to Plato, the voice always came to warn him not to do something he was intending to do. According to Xenophon the voice was a voice of command as well as of prohibition. (See the Appendix on the subject in Riddell's edition of the *Apology*.)

bad. But it is not so easy to discover what he believed to be the end, to which the rational purpose that constitutes goodness must be in its nature directed. If we assign to Socrates himself the ethical teaching of Plato's *Republic*, the end will consist in a harmony of the soul, in virtue of which each element of the soul duly fulfils its allotted function. But it is not clear that we are justified in assigning to Socrates the teaching of the *Republic*.[1] If, again, we follow Xenophon (though it is far from clear that we are justified in doing so; for Xenophon had not known Socrates intimately, and the limitations of his own mind afford grave reasons for doubting whether he really understood the mind of Socrates), the end will consist in utility, and rational purpose will in its nature be directed to something useful.[2] But what is utility? Is it the utility of individuals, or is it that of society? And if it is the latter, is social utility to be regarded as the utility of a majority of the individuals living in a society, or as a collective utility, which is something different from the utility of any number of individuals? We shall hardly find any answers to these questions in Xenophon; and if we did, we could hardly be sure that they represented the opinion of Socrates. Xenophon's identification of the Good with the Useful, like his identification of the Just with the Legal, and his further identification of the two identifications, which makes all the four terms synonymous, is perhaps only true for Xenophon.[3] Being something of a utilitarian, and altogether a law-abiding citizen, he made an image of his master accordingly; and Socrates emerges as a respectable Benthamite, denouncing as impious the man "who first divided the Just from the Useful".

The Death of Socrates

The Athenians would not have condemned to death the Socrates depicted by Xenophon. They put to death the real Socrates. He was accused of refusing to worship the gods whom the State worshipped, of introducing other and new divinities, and of corrupting the youth; and on that accusation he was condemned. The accusation contains two branches. One is religious: the other is apparently based on moral, but is perhaps in reality based on political grounds. The real sting of the accusation lies in the latter. It was the moral teaching of Socrates, and the political implication of that teaching, which was the true gravamen of his accusers. Whether or no he should be described as an intellectualist, he certainly died as a martyr for his intellectualist conception of politics. He had criticised the characteristics of Athenian demo-

[1] See the note on pp. 98 9. [2] *Memorabilia*, IV. 6, § 8; III. 9, § 4.
[3] For the identification of τὸ δίκαιον and τὸ νόμιμον, see *Mem.* IV. 4, § 18. Justice being, according to Xenophon (III. 9, § 5), part of Goodness, the Just is a branch of the Good, and therefore of the Useful.

cracy—the use of the lot; the composition of the Assembly; the ignorance of Athenian statesmen. He had preached, it might seem, that the handling of politics required some esoteric mystery of knowledge; and such preaching, in a democratic State, was at the best *incivisme*, and at the worst *lèse-majesté*. Moreover he had made converts by his preaching. Men like Alcibiades and Critias, if they had not been 'companions' or disciples, had at any rate been his associates. Alcibiades had tried to subvert Athenian democracy in the revolution of 411: Critias had actually subverted it for a time in the revolution of 404. If these were his fruits, then he *had* "corrupted the youth," and the orator Aeschines was not far wrong when he said, years afterwards, that "Socrates the Sophist was put to death because he was thought to have educated Critias". We have to remember that Athenian democracy, in the year of Socrates' death (399), must have seemed to the Athenians themselves to be insecurely based. Men remembered the oligarchical revolutions of 411 and 404: they saw the victorious Spartans establishing oligarchies wherever they could: they knew that there was an oligarchical party in Athens which sympathised with Sparta.[1] In such a suspicious temper, they naturally thought of making a great example. Antiphon, who had also professed to teach goodness, had been the leader of the revolution of 411; another teacher of goodness might lead a similar revolution against the newly restored democracy. Socrates talked of knowledge, and the need of experts: that was also the cant of oligarchical circles. Even if it were an accident that Alcibiades and Critias had been his associates, it was an undoubted fact that he had criticised democracy, and had promulgated a doctrine with the suspicious watchword of efficiency.[2]

Thus Socrates, who would never have been disturbed in the palmy and secure days of Periclean democracy, fell a victim to the weakness and fears of the restored democracy of the years that followed the end of the Peloponnesian War. It was political motives which led to his condemnation; but religious grounds were also alleged, and it remains to determine the exact significance and the relative weight of these grounds. We have already seen (*supra*, p. 8) that piety consisted for the Greeks in formally worshipping, as a matter of civic duty, the gods received by the State, and that impiety was the crime of omitting such worship; we have seen that Greek religion was thus an aspect of the political

[1] The gist of the discourse περὶ πολιτείας mentioned on p. 79, if it really belongs to the year 404, and is really intended for Athens, is the need of an alliance with Sparta and the introduction of a moderate oligarchy.

[2] There is a passage in the *Politicus* (299 B.C) in which the allusion is obviously to Socrates, which supports what is said in the text. Any man who preaches the sovereignty of wisdom in any art, and the superiority of wisdom to the letter of law, is sure to receive condemnation, on the ground that he corrupts the youth by persuading them to attempt autocratic government.

life of a political society. From this point of view it is obvious that an accusation of *incivisme* might readily be combined with an accusation of religious non-conformity; and it is obvious, again, that the latter accusation is not really a matter of religious persecution, but rather an act of political vengeance. Religious persecution as such, was unknown to the Greeks; and it would be an error to regard Socrates as a religious martyr. He died because he was supposed to be dangerous to the political order of the State; but since that order was bound up with a formal worship of the civic gods, he was also accused of being an enemy of that worship. The religious accusation was something of an after-thought, or corollary, to the political; and we may even say that it was alleged in order to create an atmosphere of prejudice, in which the real accusation would tell with more fatal effect. In themselves, the religious opinions of Socrates were nothing unusual, and nothing which the usual practice of the Greeks would ever have condemned. He had not committed the "impiety" of refusing formally to "worship the gods whom the city worshipped": on the contrary, in this as in other respects, he had satisfied the demands of civic duty. Even if he had "introduced other and new divinities," this would have been no crime in the ordinary Greek conception, so long as it did not lead to the omission of the regular civic worship of the civic deities. But it can hardly be said that he had introduced such divinities. In the early period of his life, indeed, before his 'conversion,' he may have been imbued with the notion of the physicists, that the real 'gods' were the physical forces of Nature; and the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, which, though produced in 423, seems to refer to this early period, certainly suggests that Socrates was a scientific agnostic. But the real religious convictions of Socrates, during the whole of the latter period of his life (from about 435-399), were those of a mystic rather than of an agnostic. He believed, if we may follow the indications to be found in Plato, in the Orphic doctrine of the transmigration of souls and their reward and punishment in a future life. The Orphic mysteries were nothing new: they were generally diffused in Greece; and there was nothing to prevent the combination of a belief in those mysteries with a formal worship of civic deities. It is true that the mysteries were extra-civic, or even supra-civic, and that they might be held to contain deeper and more spiritual elements than any of the civic worships. But they never menaced civic stability; they never became, as freemasonry has sometimes become in modern times, a political organisation; and even if Socrates were a believer in them, it is hard to see that his belief had anything to do with his condemnation.[1]

[1] The mysteries current in Athens were the Eleusinian. There had been a good deal of trouble about these mysteries in 415 (though the matter is very obscure), and the trouble was recrudescent in 399. In view of this trouble Professor Burnet is

On the whole, therefore, the religious accusation would seem to have been intended, if we may adapt a phrase of Cicero, *tenebras offundere judicibus in causa Socratis.* It was for *raison d'état* that he was tried: and it was for *raison d'état* that he was condemned. It is on the death of Socrates, rather than on his life, that the thought and imagination of the centuries have fastened. Indeed we may almost say that the greatest lesson of his life was his death. He taught thereby (and Plato has elicited the lesson for us in the *Apology* and the *Crito*) that for the sake of conscience a man may rise up against Cæsar, but that, in all other matters, he must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, even to the debt of his life. If he were promised acquittal, Plato makes him say, on condition of silence and of refraining from his mission, he could not obey. Greater than the command of the Athenian State was the command of the god; and greater than civic duty was his service. This is the temper of the martyr; nor is it a mistake to enrol Socrates in the ranks of the martyrs. He was faced, after all, by a conflict of duties: and by his death he sealed his witness to the choice he had made. On the one side stood his duty to the Athenian State which throughout his life, and even in his death, he loyally acknowledged. On the other side stood his duty to the god, to testify at all times and to all men—old as well as young, foreigners as well as citizens, but above all to the men of his own blood and his own State—the gospel of Knowledge. He made his choice, and he abode the consequence.[1]

Yet he was always, and never more than in his death, a loyal son of Athens. He had served in her army: he had been a member of her Council, even though he must have passed to his membership through the avenue of the lot. Her laws were to him only less sacred than the commands of the god, and not to be disobeyed except for righteousness' sake; nor would he leave the prison where he lay doomed, even when escape was easy, lest the laws should rebuke his flight. If he taught that politics was an art, that teaching after all had two sides; and if on one of its sides, by leading to an insistence on efficiency and the rule of the expert, it might seem undemocratic and revolutionary, on its other side it was far from being either. Just because it was an art, Socrates held, politics not only required knowledge, but also unselfish devotion. Every artist and craftsman, when he is engaged in the pursuit of his specific craft, is seeking not his own good or betterment, but the good of the subject of his art, and the betterment of the stuff with which he deals. If the politician too is a craftsman, then he too must seek not his own advantage, but the

inclined to suggest that the connection of Socrates with the Orphic mysteries may have helped to create a prejudice against him at his trial.

[1] According to Xenophon (*Mem.* I. 2, § 31-8), he had been commanded before, in 404, by Critias and his fellow-tyrants, to stop his teaching and his conversations with the young. We are not told that he obeyed; but it was perhaps fortunate for him that the power of the Thirty Tyrants soon collapsed.

advantage of the fellow-citizens with whom he deals, and with whose betterment his craft is concerned. This is the conception inherited by Plato, and enforced by him in the *Republic*. It is a conception exactly contrary to that of those radical Sophists, who had taught that right was the interest of the stronger, and that it was therefore right for a government, seeing that it was the stronger, to pursue and promote its own interest. It is a conception which no advocate of the democratic cause could do otherwise than endorse.

But Socrates had preached the sovereignty of knowledge; and the doctrine of the sovereignty of knowledge might easily become, in its political application, a doctrine of enlightened despotism. This, indeed, is what it became, at any rate for a time and during the middle period of his life, in the hands of Plato Such a theory of enlightened despotism was necessarily inimical to democracy; it might also become inimical to the rule of law. If knowledge is sovereign, it may be held that law becomes subordinate, or even supererogatory; and it may be urged that the living knowledge of the wise ruler transcends the dead letter of the law. This again is a conclusion which, for a time at any rate, Plato was ready to draw. Monarchical, and even absolutist, philosophies might thus draw their inspiration from Socrates; and in that sense he was the enemy of democracy. Nor was he, in the issue, altogether the friend of the city-state itself, in any form or under any kind of government. The outburst of philosophic thought which flowed from him was, at any rate in one of its channels, too broad for civic bounds. The Cynics were descended from Socrates; and the Cynics were cosmopolitans, who found their own reason and knowledge sufficient for their needs, and, craving no guidance or instruction from any city, took the world to be their home.

Politics is a matter for thought, and government is a concern of the wise. But wisdom is not the conclusion of the whole matter; nor can we afford to forget—what Socrates, and Plato after him, too often tended to forget—those elements of will and of instinct which count for so much in political affairs. For the proper guidance of the State it is necessary that the wise should rule; but for its safety and its unity it is also necessary that the will of the people should be attuned to their rule. Both are necessary; and both are equally necessary. Mere will means ochlocracy—the government of ignorance in the interest of selfishness; but mere knowledge means in the long run an intellectual despotism—a Strafford and the rule of Thorough. And as the element of will must count in the conduct of human affairs, so, too, must the element of instinct. There is necessarily much that is incalculable by reason in all human action; and the right instinct which springs from experience must always command a hearing.[1] It

[1] Lord Morley writes of "the intuitive instinct that often goes farther in the statesman's mind than deliberate analysis or argument". He quotes Bismarck: "I

is true that in the *Meno* Plato makes Socrates discover, and admit, the existence of this instinct; but it is rejected almost as soon as it is discovered, on the ground that it cannot be transmitted by instruction, and avails no man except its possessor. Yet in criticising Socrates, as in criticising his disciple Plato, we must remember their environment. They spoke of knowledge to a people which already recognised, and more than recognised, the elements of will and instinct. They spoke to an Athenian democracy, where the popular will expressed itself in temporary decrees like that which Socrates refused to put to the vote in 405, and where statesmen pleaded instinct because they had nothing else to plead. Little wonder if they spoke of knowledge, and the sovereignty of knowledge, in such an environment. They stated the half of the truth which seemed to them neglected: they omitted the complementary truth which seemed to them over-emphasised.

Note.—In the preceding sections I have followed, to a large extent, the interpretation of Socrates adopted by Professor Burnet (*Greek Philosophy*, c. VIII.-X.). Professor Burnet holds that the genuine Socrates can only be found in the dialogues of Plato (and not in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon); and he goes still further. He believes that the Platonic dialogues, down to and including the *Republic* (with the exception of the programme of studies for the guardians, which he holds to be Plato's own), are historical statements of the views of Socrates. He admits that the dialogues are not records of actual discussions (though they probably contain fragments of such discussions), and that they present Socrates as Socrates appeared to Plato; but he holds that Plato was no less an historian than an artist, and that in his dialogues he was stating the views of his master rather than using his master's name as a cover for his own. It is for this reason, he considers, that the *Republic*, for instance, is concerned not with the figures and controversies of Plato's day, but with the figures (such as Thrasymachus) and the controversies (such as that about the relation of Right and Might) of the days of Socrates. This view involves the ascription to Socrates of almost all that is ordinarily regarded as Platonic—the doctrine of ideas, the advocacy of communism, and the political theory of the three classes and the rule of the class of philosophers. I have not been able to go to this length; and while holding that the germinal ideas of Plato's political philosophy are Socratic, I have assumed that the unfolding of those ideas in their full form is Platonic.[1] I have thus referred to Socrates the doctrine of the sovereignty of knowledge, and the conception of statesmanship as an art, which are expounded in the *Meno* and *Gorgias*—just as I have referred to Protagoras the outline of an educational theory of the State which is sketched in the dialogue that bears his name. On the other hand I have ascribed to Plato himself the

have often noticed that my will had decided before my thinking was finished" (*Notes on Politics and History*, pp. 57-8).

[1] Since this book was written, and while it was in the printer's hands, an article on Professor Burnet's views, by Professor Stewart, has appeared in the issue of *Mind* for October, 1917.

further and detailed conclusions, drawn from these assumptions, that for the sake of the sovereignty of knowledge and the proper practice of the art of statesmanship there should be three specialised classes, that two of these should live under a system of communism, and that one of these two should rule in virtue of its philosophic training. In other words, the political theory of the *Republic* seems to me to start from Socratic conceptions, and to issue in Platonic conclusions.

It is part of Professor Burnet's theory that Socrates was the head of a definite philosophic 'school' at Athens; that he taught a definite doctrine in that school; and that it was this doctrine, regularly taught in the school, which Plato was naturally led to report. The main principles of the Socratic 'school,' Professor Burnet suggests, were Pythagorean; and Socrates was practically the head of the Pythagoreans in Greece. It seems at any rate certain that Plato was influenced by Pythagorean tenets, and it is natural to ascribe the transmission of that influence to Socrates, if Socrates was connected with the Pythagoreans.

Xenophon

The future progress of Greek political thought was to follow the lines laid down by Socrates. Plato is thoroughly his disciple: Aristotle builds on Plato's foundations. But before we turn to Plato, we may clear the way by first considering the political doctrines of the minor successors and followers of Socrates, some of whom carried his teaching to conclusions very different from those of Plato. In Xenophon the master found an exponent of his views who extended the gospel of capacity to such matters as horsemanship, generalship, and domestic economy. Like Plato, Xenophon was biased against Athenian democracy for its lack of capacity: unlike Plato, he sought a remedy not in a new and ideal government, but in making Athens conform to an existing type of government, nominally Persian, but in reality Spartan. This type he sketched in the *Cyropædia*, an historical novel, in which the career of Cyrus is made a vehicle for the exposition of Socratic ideas. The State, according to Xenophon, must be like an army, if it is to be as efficient as an army: it must be based on a proper system of grades and a thorough division of labour. Over all things the wise man must rule, and under him each must do the thing which he knows. The *Cyropædia* enunciates many ideas which appear again in Plato and Aristotle. Laws must not merely aim at preventing crime: education must not be left to mere private enterprise. It was not so in Ancient Persia. There law was positive and creative: it gave the citizens a spirit of righteousness, so that they had no inclination to commit an evil or dishonourable deed. There education was given by the State, and lasted all life long. "The Persian boys went to school to learn justice, as ours go to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic"; and the mentors whom the State appointed for their training were the older citizens, who had gone through their own course with honour.

Somewhat in the same way as Plato does in the *Republic*, Xenophon sketches the four stages of the life-long education of the Persians in moral and military excellence; and then he shows how in such an environment was developed the ideal ruler Cyrus—a man who was wiser and better than any of his people, and made his people wiser and better than they had ever been before. Thus in Xenophon the Greek idea of the State as a moral and educational association is re-stated in the light of Socratic ideas; and the result is the conception of an education in moral wisdom given by the State and the rule of an ideally wise man produced by that education. These are also Platonic conclusions; and indeed the *Republic* may be termed a *Cyropædia* without the historical setting of Xenophon, a *Cyropædia* informed instead by a deep philosophy of man and the world.[1]

Like Plato (at one stage of his development), Xenophon is a monarchist: unlike Plato, he is a military monarchist. He was himself a soldier, who had fought against Persia both under Cyrus and under Agesilaus; and he lived in days which witnessed the growth of professional armies in the place of the old civic militia and the rise, on the basis of these armies, of military monarchies like that of Dionysius I (405-367) at Syracuse. In a dialogue called the *Hiero*, which is generally attributed to his pen, Xenophon represents Hiero, a precursor of Dionysius as tyrant of Syracuse (478-467), in the act of discussing with the poet Simonides the problem of absolute government; and he seems to conclude that the absolute ruler is not only enviable, but may also be a public benefactor. The trend towards monarchism which Xenophon shows, alike in the *Cyropædia* and the *Hiero*, is a trend which seems characteristic alike of the practical politics and of the political theory of the age. It appears in Plato: it appears, to some extent, in Aristotle, who in the third book of the *Politics* discourses in some detail of the *παμβασιλεύς* or absolute ruler, and in the fifth book devotes his attention to the methods of ensuring the stability of tyranny. It appears again, in a close conjunction with actual politics, in the writings of Isocrates.

Isocrates

Isocrates has many affinities with Xenophon. Both may be described as thinkers of the second class, who, while not attaining to any philosophic grasp of politics, have enough of philosophic tincture to express in general terms the prevalent tendencies and opinions of their generation. Both had come under the influence of Socrates; but the Socratic influence on both is that of

[1] For the *Cyropædia cf.* Henkel, *Studien*, pp. 136 *sqq.* Xenophon also wrote two treatises, one on the Lacedæmonian Constitution, and one on the Revenues of Athens, which advocated the nationalisation of merchant shipping and of inns and lodging-houses.

Socrates *dimidiatus*—of Socrates deprived of all his profundity, and reduced to the level of the commonplace. Born in 436, and dying in 338, Isocrates overlaps at both ends the life of Plato, and even exercised an influence on Aristotle, who was his junior by more than fifty years. In his youth he had come in contact with Socrates; and while the effects of that contact may be traced in his attempt to bring to bear on civic life the 'philosophy' which he professed to teach, his failure to grasp the true teaching of Socrates may also be traced in his somewhat arid conception of the nature of philosophy. He had also felt the influence of the teaching of the Sophists, more especially of Prodicus, who taught the nice use of language, and, indirectly, of Gorgias the rhetorician. His attention was turned to rhetoric; and about 392 he opened a school, which lasted for more than fifty years, for the teaching of philosophy, by which he really understood something of the nature of political oratory. He sought to distinguish the teaching of his school from that of the Sophists;[1] and in the effort to establish that distinction he gave currency to the sense of the word Sophist, as a teacher of sophisms and a master of the tricks of disputation, in which it is generally used to-day. Professing to teach philosophy, he seems to belong to the company of Plato and Socrates. But there are fundamental differences between the Socratic school and the school of Isocrates. Unlike Socrates, he held that opinion was a better guide in practical affairs than science; "it is better to form probable opinions about useful things than to have an exact knowledge of useless things".[2] Unlike Plato, who found the kernel of education in scientific and mathematical studies, he held that education consisted in the attainment of the faculty of forming right opinions on political subjects, and more especially of the faculty of giving just expression to those opinions. His philosophy begins and ends in "the art of speaking and writing on large political subjects, considered as a preparation for advising or acting in political affairs".[3] But if there was a great gulf between Plato's conception of philosophy and that of Isocrates, there seems no reason to speak of a feud between the two. On the contrary—at any rate in some of their political ideas—they are rather allies than enemies. Both have the same monarchical trend. Plato, who had a keen sense of Greek unity, as the fifth book of the *Republic* shows, may well have approved of the scheme of Isocrates for a union of Greece against Persia. Isocrates, who believed, in his way, in the training of statesmen, can hardly have frowned on the attempts of Plato to train the young Dionysius of Syracuse.[4]

Isocrates may be regarded as both an educationalist and a political

[1] Isocrates is referring to the Sophists of the fourth century, and not to those of the fifth.

[2] *Helenæ Encomium*, § 5 (quoted in Jebb, *Attic Orators*, II. 49).

[3] Jebb, *Attic Orators*, II. 38-9.

[4] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, 215-9.

essayist. In the former capacity he trained, for over fifty years, not only all the rhetoricians of his day, but also a number of statesmen, philosophers, and historians: in the latter he handled all the current topics of politics in the fifty years between the peace of Antalcidas and the victory of Philip at Chæronea (387-338). The two activities were closely connected. His education was an education in rhetoric: his political essays were intended to show how rhetoric should be used. He was a great stylist; but he regarded rhetoric less as a study of form than as a preparation for politics. As such, he believed that it was superior to the art of legislation, with which Plato and Aristotle were both concerned. That was an art easily mastered, and concerned only with the internal affairs of the State; but rhetoric, as he conceived it, dealt with the higher questions of the relation of State to State, and was at once the parent and child of the higher statesmanship. The real problem which occupies Isocrates is thus the problem of the mutual relations of Greek States. It is a problem which to some extent occupies Aristotle in the *Politics*. He urges that Plato in the *Laws*, and Phaleas of Chalcedon in the political scheme he proposed, have both neglected to consider the foreign relations of the States they sought to establish; and in two passages in the seventh book he discusses the proper attitude of a State to its neighbours.[1] But Isocrates is nevertheless the one Greek writer who really concentrates his attention on this problem; and it is not unfair to say that he transcends the internal politics of the city-state, and realises that the actual contemporary problem is to find the proper basis for the relations between each city-state and the rest.

We must judge the rhetoric of Isocrates from his own speeches, which are really political pamphlets rather than speeches. Some of these are concerned, it is true, with the internal politics of Athens. The *Areopagiticus*, which belongs to the year 346, is devoted to an advocacy of the 'ancestral democracy' of Athens. The term was one which had long been used (*cf. supra*, p. 44), and to which different senses had been attached. To Isocrates the age of Solon represents the ideal past to which Athens ought to return. The use of the lot, which is contrary to the true or proportionate equality which distinguishes worth from worthlessness, should be abolished; and the fittest should be picked by election for each office. The old Council of the Areopagus, which had been shorn of its powers, should resume them once more; and, recognising that the education of the citizen does not end with youth, it should act as a general censor of morals and a guardian of public discipline. Isocrates professes to be a democrat; but he desires a tempered democracy, "like that of Sparta," in which office falls to the most competent, and

[1] *Politics*, II. 6, § 2 and § 14: VII. 2-3 and 14-15. It should be said at once, however, that Plato, in the fifth book of the *Republic*, and again in the last book of the *Laws*, certainly discusses the problem of foreign relations.

liberty is not interpreted as licence. These are commonplaces which recur in Aristotle; and in the same way the argument of the *De Pace* (355), which is directed against the retention by Athens of an Empire, which she had never held in the good old days, would seem to be also re-echoed by Aristotle, when he discusses the dangers of imperialism in the seventh book of the *Politics*.

As far as internal politics are concerned, Isocrates thus advocates for Athens, as the cure of her disorders, a return to ancestral democracy and a surrender of the vestiges of her Empire. But he felt that the true cure for internal disorders was really external, and could only be found in the sphere of foreign policy. Disorders would disappear of themselves from the city-states of Greece, if they were once leagued together in a 'grand design' for the conquest of the East. Isocrates was more than a citizen of Athens: he was a citizen of Greece.[1] He saw that Greece had one culture; and he himself had rendered no small service to the promotion of the unity of that culture. He believed that this culture was the real differentia between the Greek and the barbarian;[2] and he urged that unity of culture should be turned into unity of policy, and that this policy should be directed against the barbarian. Thus would Greece gain cohesion, and her cities be cured of their disorders; and not only so, but Asia would gain liberty, and her peoples would be freed from their slavery.

Isocrates was not the first to preach this policy. Gorgias, in a speech at Olympia, where the Greek world assembled every four years for the great national games, "had become a counsellor of concord, seeking to turn the Greeks against the barbarians".[3] The orator Lysias, in 388, had delivered an Olympic oration, in which he exhorted the Greeks to abandon civil strife, and to liberate both the Greeks of Ionia from the rule of the barbarian Artaxerxes and the Greeks of Sicily from the rule of the tyrant Dionysius.[4] Eight years later, in 380, Isocrates wrote his Olympic oration, the *Panegyricus*, which he never delivered, but which he gave to the world as a pamphlet. The gist of his discourse was the need for a union between Athens and Sparta in a common campaign against Persia. Such a union was impossible, and the discourse of Isocrates fell on deaf ears.

[1] The orator Lysias had already spoken of himself as "a citizen of Greece" in his Olympic oration of 388 (Jebb, *Attic Orators*, I. 156).

[2] *Panegyricus*, § 50; *De Antidosi*, § 293. It is interesting to compare the Pan-hellenism of Isocrates with that of Plato in the fifth book of the *Republic*, on which *cf. infra*, pp. 264-8.

[3] Philostratus, quoted in Jebb, *Attic Orators*, I. 203-4.

[4] Lysias is an interesting figure, who touches the history of political theory at another point. His father Cephalus was a friend of Socrates; and the scene of the *Republic* is laid in the house of Cephalus, while Cephalus himself, and Polemarchus, the elder brother of Lysias, are both persons in the dialogue. Lysias wrote a defence of Socrates in 392, in reply to a pamphlet against Socrates published in that year by the Sophist Polycrates.

Two other alternative lines of policy remained, either of which Isocrates might have advocated. One was the union of the Greek cities in a federal State. Thebes, which attained a brief supremacy in 371, might have been the nucleus of a Greek federation: the old Bœotian league, which had been dissolved in 387, might have served as a model for an Hellenic league; and Epaminondas, who showed that he could rise to the conception of a citizenship of Greece, might well have been its statesman. But Thebes failed to use, and Isocrates failed to see, the opportunity. He turned to the alternative policy, and tried to find some ruler who might be, not the statesman of a federal Greece, but the general of an alliance of city-states. Federation was beyond the scope of his political vision; he was too much tied to the city-state to advocate any union higher than a loose confederation or military alliance under a single general.

He sought to find such a general for many years, and in various quarters of the Greek world. First he set his hopes on Jason of Pheræ, the Tagus of the Thessalians: after his death in 370, he turned to Dionysius of Syracuse; and finally he found the man of destiny in Philip of Macedonia, to whom, between 346 and 338, he addressed a speech (the *Philippus*) and two epistles.[1] In the speech (written in 346) he urged Philip to bring into amity the Greek city-states; to place himself at the head of a united Greece as its president, and lead it to war against the barbarian; in a word, to show himself at once the benefactor of Greece, the true King of Macedon, and the master of Asia. Isocrates is thus concerned to find an "hegemonical authority" to conduct the great war which will save Greece from internal disorder, and spread Greek culture in Asia—a policy which has found a curious analogy in modern times. We may call him a monarchist; but he is a monarchist within limits. What he really desires is only a military hegemony in Greece, and that only for the one purpose of war in the East. He may, it is true, in addressing a ruler of Cyprus, praise tyranny as "the noblest of all things"; but in the *Philippus* itself, addressed as it is to a king, he speaks of monarchy as little suited to the Greeks. The truth is that Isocrates can hardly be said to have a political theory, or to be a political theorist. He has a political policy, and he is a political journalist. As a political journalist, he has his qualities; and he may remind a modern reader of the editor of some great newspaper, who steadily advocates a line of policy in his leaders. But being a great journalist, he was debarred from being a great theorist or a great man of action. Living in the dubious border-land between theory and action,[2] he failed to attain

[1] The second of the epistles is written after Philip's victory over Athens and Thebes at Chæronea, and urges Philip to crown his glory by making the barbarians helots of the Greeks. The old tradition that the news of Chæronea "killed with despair the old man eloquent" is the reverse of true. It filled him with new hopes of the future.

[2] Plato alludes to this border-land, *cf. infra*, p. 144 n. 1.

the glories of either. He was neither a Demosthenes nor an Aristotle. Professing to be an orator and a good citizen, he was destitute of the fiery eloquence and the generous civic patriotism of Demosthenes: professing to teach 'philosophy,' and a philosophy which was political, he had no such grasp of the philosophy of politics as men have always found in Aristotle. Yet, when all is said, he had an insight into the trend of contemporary history which was denied to Demosthenes and Aristotle. He transcended the inner politics of the city-state as they failed to do: he realised the problems of the foreign policy of Greece as they never did. And when in 337 Philip of Macedon was made by the Congress of Corinth general of Greece with full powers for the prosecution of the war with Persia, Isocrates might almost be said to be justified at last of all his teaching.

The Cynics and Cyrenaics

As we turn from Xenophon and Isocrates to the Cynics and Cyrenaics, we enter upon an absolutely different line of thought. While previous thinkers had entertained and expanded the old Greek idea of the State, the schools which go by these names abandoned it altogether. While Isocrates rose to the conception of Hellenic citizenship, the Cynics advanced to a conception of citizenship of the world. In them we see the conscious apostles[1] of a cosmopolitan tendency which was perhaps inherent in the philosophical schools, composed as they generally were of teachers and disciples drawn together from all the quarters of the Greek world. The Cynics[2] based their position partly on the life, partly on the teaching of Socrates. If Socrates had gone barefoot, and had talked with every man, high or low, so did the Cynics. If Socrates had taught that a man should know himself, and act according to his knowledge, the Cynics pushed his teaching further, and taught that the wise man, who had attained unto knowledge, was sufficient unto himself. Following and exaggerating the life of Socrates, they developed into mendicant beggars, something after the pattern of the early Franciscans, but with this great difference, that they embraced poverty not because they loved the kingdom of heaven, but because they hated the kingdoms of the earth. Socrates had criticised some of the institutions of democracy: they revolted against the whole of society, with all its grades and its institutions. They were the antinomians of the Greek world—the enemies of property, family, city, and whatever else involved degree, priority, or place. One man was as good as

[1] Prodicus is already represented by Plato, in the *Protagoras*, as regarding all men as "by nature" fellow-citizens; and Antiphon the Sophist, as we have seen (*supra*, p. 69), was already enunciating a definite doctrine of cosmopolitanism at the end of the fifth century. It may be added that the cosmopolitanism of the Cynics, like that of Antiphon, but unlike that of the Stoics, is negative rather than positive in character. They disliked the "city of Cecrops" more than they liked the "city of Zeus".

[2] *Cf.* McCunn, *Intern. Journ. Eth.* XIV. 185 *sqq.*

another, and one place was as good as another: "Why should I be proud of belonging to the soil of Attica with the worms and slugs?" Denationalised by this spirit of revolt—"professing no city, or home, or country," they fortified themselves in their *incivisme* by their interpretation of Socrates' teaching. "Virtue is knowledge": it is an inward thing, and only an inward thing. External things are not the aids of virtue: they are of the nature of hindrances. A man must leave all things and follow virtue: she alone is free. "External institutions are obstructions: all social interests are distractions." "He taught me," said Diogenes, speaking of Antisthenes, the founder of the school, "that the only thing that was mine was the free exercise of my own thoughts." The wise man, self-poised in his own *αὐτάρκεια*, thus became their ideal: the Cynic was sufficient to himself, and independent of everything outside himself. To him all things were indifferent; and the State was a meaningless thing. If he acknowledged any citizenship, it was citizenship of the world; and that was no citizenship. Hence, it was said by Plutarch, "Alexander realised the Cynic ideal on its political side by the foundation of his universal empire".[1]

Thus was the city-state sapped, both by the radical assertion that every man was as good as every other man, whatever his political status, and by the no less radical conception of the wise man as sufficient for himself, and contented with his membership in the life of the universe. The old idea that life must be lived in the graded hierarchy of a civic community—that only in such a community, and only through the social training which it gives, can men attain the full measure of humanity—is dwindling and dying. Two new ideas are entering the world, both destined to a long history—the idea that all men are naturally equal, and the idea that they are all by nature brothers in a single human society. We seem close to Christianity and the Church Universal; and indeed a continuous line of thought can be traced from Cynics to Stoics, from Stoics to the early fathers—a line of thought along which the conception of the independence of the individual soul goes together with that of a world-association of souls. The idea of a world-association was certainly present to the Cynics. A number of political treatises are assigned to their founder Antisthenes, a contemporary of Plato: he is said to have written a work *Concerning Law or the State*; and two treatises, a *Menexenus, or Concerning Rule*, and a *Cyrus, or Concerning Monarchy*, are also ascribed to his pen. Apparently he held that the wise man would not live in a State according to its enacted laws, but would live by the law of virtue, which is universal; while he believed that the nearer man approached to "the nature of animals" (a subject on which he also wrote), the better it would be for human life. As it is used by Antisthenes, the

[1] Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, E.T., II. 161.

parallel of animal life serves to point the cry--Back to Nature: abandon cities, laws, and artificial institutions for all that is simple and primitive. It is the cry of the Radical Sophists · it is the cry of Rousseau in his youth. When we come to Diogenes, the greatest of the Cynics, we find a greater moderation, and a different atmosphere. In his *Republic* (if the accounts of its views which have been preserved are not coloured by Platonic reminiscences), he taught that the only right State was that of the world (τὴν ἐν κόσμῳ). He advocated community of wives and children: he mocked at the illusions of noble birth and slavery. Advocating the destruction of the family, he must also (though we are not told that he did) have advocated the abolition of private property. But on the other hand he believed in the necessity of law, and he held that law was of no avail without a State. It would seem as if here we were confronted with the idea of a world-state, with a world-law (like the Roman *jus naturæ*)—a world-state in which all were equal, bond and free, Greek and barbarian,[1] and which must have been governed, because it was so wide and universal, by a single autocratic head. When we remember that Diogenes was the contemporary of Aristotle (dying the year before him), we cannot but feel that in his teaching (if it is correctly recorded) there is more of a sympathy for the contemporary movement of politics than we find in the pages of Aristotle. While the city-state lay dying, and while Aristotle busied himself with medicines and dietaries, Diogenes lifted up his voice, and cried--the King is dying, is dead: long live the new King of the world.

At the beginning of the *Politics* we find something which looks like an attack on the Cynics: the man who thinks he can exist without a city is either a beast or a god. In truth the Cynics figured alternately as either—sometimes as gods, creatures of pure reason, untroubled by passion, sufficing to themselves; sometimes as beasts, in the squalor and indecency into which they flung themselves in order to point their protest against the 'conventional' character of all clean living and decency. But while Aristotle attacks the Cynics, he seems also to use their language. His watchword too is *αὐτάρκεια*, or self-sufficiency, exactly as that of the Cynics was. But the Cynics believed in the *αὐτάρκεια* of an isolated self: Aristotle believed in that of a social individuality.[2] Man is only sufficient to himself in Aristotle's eyes when he is a citizen, and it is just in order to attain

[1] Antisthenes was a Thracian; Diogenes came from Sinope. This perhaps suggests one reason of the attack on the Greek city; and it explains the Cynic teaching *omnes homines natura æquales sunt*.

[2] It is possible that there is some reference to the Cynics in the discussion of the theoretic life at the end of the *Ethics*. It is possible, too, that Plato is thinking of the Cynics when he speaks of the philosopher retiring from the world's storm "to live his own life" (*Republic*, 496 E). But Plato adds at once that such a man "will not do his greatest work unless he finds a suitable State, where he will have a larger growth and be the saviour of his own country as well as of himself" (497 A).

self-sufficiency that he widens himself out into a citizen. In Plato, as in Aristotle, there is something of a Cynic element. The community of children and wives is a Cynic tenet; and there are many points of contact between the Cynic ideal and the "city of Swine" described in the second book of the *Republic*, even if there is no allusion to the Cynics, and even though Plato does not intend either to satirise or to eulogise their views.

The Cynics made individualism the centre of their system: they believed that the individual was sufficient of himself to do his own duty. The Cyrenaic School, equally descended from Socrates, pursued the same individualistic direction. Knowledge, in their view, was sufficient for salvation; but salvation lay, according to their tenets, in the pursuit of pleasure. Finding the goal of life in the cult of a wise pleasure, the Cyrenaics no longer needed the State to supply any rule of action. Philosophy was good, Aristippus is reported to have said, "to enable the philosopher, supposing all laws were abolished, to go on living as before". Having attained a height where law was unnecessary, the Cyrenaics found it easy to regard law as conventional, and to hold that right and wrong existed by custom and enactment, not by Nature.[1] Yet they did not abolish the law to make room for a private pleasure which was its enemy. On the contrary, they conceived that a man might find pleasure in the welfare of his friend or of his country. "The prosperity of our country, equally with our own, is of itself enough to give us joy." But the joy of which they spoke was that of the "pleasurable moment" (μονόχρονος ἡδονή), which, if it might be found in patriotism, might equally be found in art or any other ecstacy.

The conclusion of the whole matter is thus the same for the lover of pleasure as it is for the zealot for duty. Both regard the individual as sufficient, whether to measure his own pleasure, or to discern his own duty. Both regard a wise indifference to externals as necessary for the attainment of the desired end. If a man gives to fortune the hostages of a living interest in anything save the end of life, he may fail to attain it. Both, therefore, deny to the individual any real interest in a civic unit; and both leave man with the negative residuum of an interest in the world, and the world alone. A full and active life which realised all possibilities was to Aristotle the result of life in the city. Along with citizenship of the world-state went the idea of the calm of a solitude (ἀπάθεια or ἀταραξία), in which there was none of the struggle and strife, and none of the vigour and life, of the πόλις. Such a temper may partly have prepared the decay of the city and the coming of 'Alexandrinism': on the other hand, it is also its expression and its result.

[1] We have already seen (p. 70) that Democritus perhaps combined an hedonistic philosophy with a doctrine of the origin of the State and its law in contract.

CHAPTER VI

PLATO AND THE PLATONIC DIALOGUE

The Life of Plato

PLATO was born about the year 428 B.C. By birth he belonged to a distinguished Athenian family. On his mother's side he could trace his pedigree as far back as Athenian archons of the middle of the seventh century; and among the men of his own generation he was connected with Critias, who was prominent among the members of the oligarchical clique which ruled for a time in 404. It would be a mistake, however, to judge the politics of Plato's family from the career of Critias, or to maintain that Plato inherited from his family a prejudice against Athenian democracy. The politics of his family were Whig rather than Tory: they were proud of their connection with Solon; and it would be truer to ascribe to the influence of his family, if any such influence can be traced at all, a prejudice in favour of that mixed and moderate form of constitution which is advocated in the *Laws*.[1] On occasion, and more especially in the *Gorgias*, Plato is a bitter critic of Periclean democracy; but he can also do justice to its better side even in the *Republic*; and in later dialogues like the *Politicus* and the *Laws*, in which Socratic influence is less present, he shows a real appreciation of its value.

He was perhaps never a disciple, in the strict sense, of the Socratic school, but from his earliest years he was a member of the Socratic circle. Originally he seems to have thought of embracing a political career at Athens; but the death of Socrates, by which he was profoundly influenced, changed all his plans, and he turned to the life of philosophy. Down to the date of his first visit to Sicily, in 387 B.C., he was largely occupied in the composition of his earlier dialogues. To this period belong the *Apology*, the *Crito*, the *Gorgias*, the *Protagoras*, and probably the greater part of the *Republic*. During the same period, which lies between his thirtieth and his fortieth

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 209-10. The family pride in the connection with Solon (*cf.* also the *Charmides*, 157 E-158 A) appears in the *Timæus* (*cf.* 23 A), where the whole story of Atlantis is recorded as a family tradition derived from Solon. The Critias who tells that story, and gives his name to the *Critias*, is not the oligarchical leader of 404, but his grandfather, who was also Plato's great grandfather (Burnet, *op. cit*, p. 338).

year, travel may also have counted for much in the development of his mind. He is said to have visited Egypt, and here (if the story is true, as it very well may be) he may have learned to value that division of labour among a number of classes which he afterwards advocated in the *Republic*.[1] In 387 he visited Italy and Sicily, the stronghold of the Pythagoreans. During his visit he came into contact with Dionysius I, the tyrant of Syracuse, and expounded to him so vividly the tenets of the *Republic* that, annoyed by his denunciation of injustice and condemnation of tyranny, Dionysius delivered him to a Spartan ambassador who sold him into slavery. Ransomed from slavery, he returned to Athens; and here, in 386 B.C., he opened the Academy, in which the remaining forty years of his life were passed.

A writer, and the apologist and exponent of Socrates' teaching, down to 386, Plato now became a philosopher and the head of a philosophic school. Athens was by this time the University of Greece. She had lost the Empire which she had held in the preceding century; but in exchange she had gained what in that century she had never held, the position both of central market of Greek trade and of central focus of Greek thought. The schools of Plato and of Isocrates were both meant for Greece at large, and both drew on Greece at large. The curriculum of the Platonic school, as we may gather from the sixth and seventh books of the *Republic*, was largely mathematical. The approach to philosophy lay through geometry: the inscription over Plato's door, we are told by a Byzantine grammarian, contained the words, "Let no man ignorant of geometry enter here". The mathematical trend of the Platonic school, which we may ascribe to Pythagorean influence, is in marked contrast with the biological studies of Aristotle and the Peripatetics; but Plato also directed his school to biological studies, and in the *Critias* he himself gives "an account of the geological history of Attica and its economic consequences which is almost on a level with the most modern discussions of the kind".[2] The lectures which he delivered in the Academy, both on mathematics and other branches of science, and on the final studies of logic and metaphysics, to which science was intended to serve as a propædeutic, must have engaged the bulk of Plato's thought and leisure in the last forty years of his life. They are all lost to us. We have none of Plato's lectures, just as we have none of Aristotle's set writings. We have lost one side of Plato's work, just as we have lost the other side of the work of Aristotle.[3] Our loss is the more serious, as the real doctrine of Plato must have been communicated in his lectures. His dialogues discuss particular theses; but Platonism as a whole, Platonism as a

[1] Plato refers to the Egyptian system of classes in the *Timæus* (24 A).
[2] Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
[3] *Ibid.*, 214-5. Hence, as Burnet remarks, "the difficulty we feel in passing from Plato to Aristotle . . . we are . . . comparing two quite different things".

general and sustained body of thought, must have been expounded in the lecture-room, and must have been couched in the same close-packed form as the doctrine of Aristotle.[1]

Whatever the emphasis laid by Plato on scientific studies, the ultimate purpose of his teaching and his school was none the less thoroughly and essentially an ethical purpose. Like all the philosophers of Greece, he sought to impart knowledge which should issue in action, and to teach a philosophy which should be a way and an inspiration of life. His philosophy, "in the first place, is the conversion of a soul, and in the second place . . . the service of mankind".[2] He believed that 'conversion' came not by any sudden gust, and not on any great wave of emotion, but by a gradual turning of the eye towards the light through a steady training in science. But if it came otherwise than we generally think of religious conversion as coming, it equally brought a new life, and it was equally an initiation and ordination into the service of men. The service to which the Platonic disciples were called was not a service of preaching, or a service which took the shape of what we should nowadays call social work, but a service in the world of politics, which took the form of guiding and, if it might be, governing States. Here Plato was at one with Isocrates. If, as we have seen, they diverged in their views of philosophy—if the one laid on science the stress which the other laid on culture, and if the one sought to give a scientific and the other a literary education—they had both, none the less, the same practical object, and they both sought to set right what was wrong in the political state of Greece. They both tended to monarchism; and both of them sought to find, and to inspire, a ruler who should fulfil their ideals—who should, so the one dreamed, unite Greece in the Great Crusade; who should, so the other hoped, unite all classes of the State in common service to the one true Good.

The aim of Plato was to train the philosophic ruler, who should rule by trained intelligence and not by the letter of law, or, if that aim were unattainable, to train the philosophic legislator, who should imbue even the letter of law with the spirit of wisdom and understanding. The former is the ideal of the *Republic*: the latter is the ideal of the *Laws*. These ideals were far from being dreams or visions; and the actual achievement of the Academy and its master was far from inconsiderable. The Academy was a school of political training, from which statesmen and legislators issued. Plato sent out his disciples to set in order a number of States: Xenócrates, next

[1] In an interesting passage in the Seventh *Epistle* (341 C) Plato writes, "there is no writing of mine, nor ever will be" on certain subjects, by which he apparently means the nature of the Ideas. These things cannot be explained like other subjects of study: they need constant association and intercourse (in other words, years of constant lectures and classes), before the fire of understanding can be kindled into a sudden flame.

[2] Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

successor but one to Plato as head of the Academy, gave to Alexander, at his request, counsels on monarchy, and, enjoying the confidence of the Athenians, played some part in the politics of their city.[1] The influence of the Academy was widespread: in the East it touched Alexander, the champion of Greece against Persia, and in the West Dionysius II, the defender of Greece against Carthage. In one sphere that influence was deep and permanent. The development of Greek law owes no small debt to the work of the Academy. Plato himself, in his later years, attempted, somewhat in the spirit of Bentham,[2] to codify and modify Greek law in the light of his principles; and it is possible that his *Laws* exercised a profounder influence on contemporary Greece than did his *Republic*. "His work," it has been said, "is the foundation of Hellenistic law;" and in so far as the Academy helped to shape Hellenistic law, its master exerted an influence on the development of the *jus gentium* of the Romans.[3]

Nor was this all. In Sicily, and when he was between sixty and seventy years of age, Plato made a direct attempt to achieve something of his highest political ideal, and to turn a tyrant into a philosophic ruler. From the Seventh of his *Epistles*,[4] which is in the nature of an *Apologia* for the part which he played in Syracusan affairs, we may gather the motives of his action and the methods which he followed. As a young man, he writes, he had already turned his thoughts to a political career. He had been in friendly relations with some of the Thirty, who were then ruling Athens, and he had lively expectations that they would achieve a political reform which would make it possible for him to listen to their invitation to enter politics. Their treatment of Socrates spoiled his hopes; but their fall led to a gradual revival of his political ambitions (324 B-325 A). The shock of the trial and death of Socrates turned the current of his thoughts: he put aside political ambitions for political reflection, debating in his mind how a reformation of the whole constitution of the State might be carried into effect; and meanwhile he resolved to bide his time (325 E-326 A). Finally, he came to see that politics were so incurably out of joint that only a radical reformation would be of any avail, and he was compelled to declare that justice could only triumph

[1] Plutarch, *Adv. Col.*, 1126 c (quoted in Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 303 n. 1); Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, IV. pp. 5-7. There is a story that Epaminondas of Thebes asked Plato to legislate for his new city of Megalopolis (Diog. Laert., III. p. 23).

[2] Bentham, zealous as he was for legislation in the light of a principle, and successful as he was in imbuing with his tenets a number of disciples who exercised an influence on the course of English legislation, is in some respects a parallel to Plato, though very far from being a Platonist; *cf. infra*, p. 306, and *cf.* also *supra*. p. 9 note.

[3] The *jus gentium*, administered as it was for foreigners, must from the first have been influenced by the Greek law of South Italy and Sicily, and afterwards, as the Romans came in contact with the East, it must have been still further influenced by the Hellenistic law common throughout the East; *cf.* Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 304, and *infra*, p. 353.

[4] I have gone on the assumption that this *Epistle* is genuine, and I have also used the Third and the Eighth. There is also some reason for thinking that the Fourth and the Thirteenth are also Platonic; *cf.* Hackforth, *The Authorship of the Platonic Epistles*

through the reign of philosophy, in the day when either philosophers became kings or kings turned philosophers (326 B; *cf. Rep.*, 473 D). He was in this frame of mind when, in 387, he visited Italy and Sicily, where he found confusion no less confounded than in Greece itself. But during his visit he met at Syracuse Dion, the brother-in-law of Dionysius I; and Dion became an eager convert to his views. Some twenty years after this visit Dionysius I died, and was succeeded by Dionysius II. Dion, remembering the effect on himself of his meeting with Plato, and hoping that Dionysius II would be affected in the same way if he came under the same influence, persuaded him to invite Plato to his court. With the invitation from Dionysius came a message from Dion, saying that the hour had now struck for the training of the philosopher-king (328 A). Plato was dubious of success. But he felt it his duty to put into practice his thoughts about proper laws and the right constitution; he was ashamed of being judged by himself as only a man of words if he failed to grasp at a chance of action; and he felt that philosophy would be condemned in his person if he did not seek to show that after all it was a real way of life (328 B-329 B). He accepted the invitation, and in 367, at the age of sixty, he came to Sicily.

The situation to which he came had its difficulties, and it had its possibilities. Dionysius II was now about thirty years of age, and not quite so young, or so likely to be amenable to training, as Plato might have desired. On the other hand he had been kept aloof from affairs by his father: he was impressionable; and he had, or professed to have, an enthusiasm for the study of philosophy. Plato himself had been for the last twenty years training men for action in the Academy; and though Dionysius could not come to the Academy, the Academy might, as it were, come to him, and much might be hoped from its coming. Plato had sent out pupils from the Academy to a life of statesmanship: if he went out himself, to train an hereditary ruler in statesmanship, he went out on a definitely practical errand, with a definite chance of success. The position of affairs in Sicily and Syracuse had large possibilities. In Syracuse itself a right constitution might be formed: in Sicily at large the ruined Greek cities, devastated by war, might be restored as a bulwark against Carthage. Sicily, like Asia Minor, was a meeting-place of Hellene and non-Hellene; and Plato, who had Pan-Hellenic ideas, as the fifth book of the *Republic* and the Seventh *Epistle* (332 E-333 A) both prove, might hope to aid in the West the work of Hellenisation which Isocrates preached, and Alexander afterwards achieved, in the East.

All went awry. Plato, to whom, as we have seen, mathematics was the avenue to truth, began by introducing Dionysius to mathematical studies;[1] and Dionysius, who desired a speedier road, found

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, c. 13.

his studies irksome. Worse still—and this is the point which Plato himself emphasises in the Seventh *Epistle*—the court of Dionysius was full of dissension and intrigue; and within four months of Plato's coming Dion, who was earnest to the verge of obstinacy (328 B),[1] was banished from Syracuse. For some time Plato remained, but with no prospect of success; and eventually, in 366, he returned to Athens, visiting on his way the Pythagorean Archytas, who played a great part in the politics of Tarentum, and forming a friendship which afterwards stood him in good stead.

On the whole, he had failed to achieve any definite success. Syracuse had not been reformed: the Sicilian cities had not been restored: Plato had pressed Dionysius, who afterwards made this a matter of reproach against him, to perfect his education before he attempted political action.[2] But there had been no open breach between Plato and Dionysius. When he left Syracuse, Dionysius had promised to send for him again, to recall Dion, and to set Syracuse in order with their aid; and within a year of his departure we find Plato in correspondence with Dionysius, addressing to him a curious letter (the Thirteenth of the Platonic *Epistles*) which shows the "philosopher in undress" and displays a knowledge of money-matters which some have thought inconsistent and almost unbecoming. Five years, however, elapsed before Plato's next visit to Syracuse. During these years he continued to teach in the Academy: Dion remained in exile; and Dionysius pursued his studies fitfully, even writing a treatise on metaphysics which professed to reveal 'the secret of Plato'. At last, in 361, Dionysius sent for Plato, but without recalling Dion, who was asked to stay away from Syracuse for another year (338 B). Dion, who was spending the time of his exile in Greece, pressed Plato to go. At first he refused, feeling that Dionysius was not fulfilling the whole of the promise he had made five years before; but when Archytas wrote from Tarentum to urge him to come, and assured him of the good disposition and zeal for study of Dionysius, he finally consented. When he reached Syracuse he felt it necessary, remembering the facility with which Dionysius had professed to penetrate the secrets of metaphysics, to represent to him the difficulty of the study of philosophy, and the labour and time which it needed (340 B). Perhaps this beginning hardly conciliated the good will of Dionysius: at any rate a breach soon arose between the two in regard to Dion, towards whom Plato felt that Dionysius was behaving unfairly in

[1] In later years (*Epistle* IV, 321 B-C) Plato warns Dion that he is considered to be less courteous than he should be; and he bids him remember, that success in action comes through winning men over, and that obstinacy is the stable-companion of solitude.

[2] In the Third *Epistle*, written to Dionysius II about 358, Plato defends himself against this reproach (*cf.* especially 319 C). In the Seventh *Epistle*, which was written about 352, Plato speaks of himself as having intended to press Dionysius to restore the ruined cities, when once he had made him wise and prudent (332 E).

money-matters. In the issue Plato found himself in a species of honourable captivity, from which he only escaped back to Greece through an appeal to the good offices of Archytas.[1]

This was the end of any direct action by Plato himself in Syracusan affairs. But for the next ten years he continued to show an interest, as a spectator rather than as a participator, in the distracted politics of the city. In 360 he met Dion at the Olympic Games, and was besought by him to aid with his friends in the expedition against Dionysius which he was already contemplating. He refused to take any personal part (350 C), pleading that he was bound by the hospitality of Dionysius;[2] and soon afterwards, about 358, we find him once more in correspondence with Dionysius, and writing to him the Third of the *Epistles* to defend himself from the charge of having dissuaded him from the restoration of the ruined Greek cities in Sicily. Dion proceeded with his expedition, in which he was joined by some of Plato's friends, including Speusippus, his nephew and afterwards his successor as the head of the Academy. The expedition proved successful, and in 357 Dionysius was expelled. With Dion, the friend and disciple of Plato, in sole control, Syracuse might seem destined to become the model philosophic State. But trouble arose once more. Sicily, as Plato says of his own experiences there, seemed cursed by an evil fate (350 D). Dion was stiff-necked: factions sprang into life; and the Fourth of the Platonic *Epistles*, addressed to Dion at this time, and urging him to adopt a policy of conciliation, proved of no avail. Dion failed to show himself a heaven-born legislator after the manner of Lycurgus and Cyrus, as Plato would have had him be (320 D); and in the issue he was assassinated in 353 by Callippus, an Athenian who had once been a member of the Academy. It was at this juncture that Plato wrote to "the friends of Dion," at their request, the Seventh *Epistle*, which in part, as we have seen, is an *Apologia pro vita sua*, and in part an offer of advice for the future conduct of Sicilian affairs. The friends of Dion, he urges, must seek to inaugurate the rule of law, and to this end they must empower a commission of fifty members to draft a code. This, he adds, is not indeed the ideal: it is second to what he and Dion had hoped and sought to realise in earlier days (the rule, that is to say, of a philosopher-king); but it is, at any rate, the best available

[1] Plato's relations to Archytas, the philosopher-ruler of Tarentum, are interesting; but we know very little of them. One of the Platonic *Epistles* (the Ninth), which may or may not be genuine, is written to encourage Archytas to continue to take part in public affairs.

[2] In the Fourth *Epistle*, written to Dion after his expedition had proved successful, Plato speaks of his zeal and enthusiasm for its success (320 A). The two passages are not incompatible: Plato may have been eager for the success of his friend's expedition, even though he felt that it would not be right for him to take any personal part in it.

(337 B-D). In the same sense he wrote, a little later, about 351, the Eighth *Epistle*, in which, addressing himself once more to the friends of Dion, he reiterates, on broader lines, his previous advice. Once more he advocates, first and foremost, the institution of the reign of law (355 B-C); and along with that he proposes something of a mixed constitution, which may reconcile the interests of different factions. A triumvirate should be formed, in which the expelled Dionysius should be joined with the son of Dion and a younger son of Dionysius I; and by its side should stand a body of thirty-five Guardians of the Law, with an Assembly and Council, to decide on questions of war and peace (356 A-D). This, and the restoration of the ruined Greek cities, are the two things which Dion would have done if he had lived. On the latter point Plato lays especial emphasis. All Hellenes must seek, with all their hearts, to find a remedy to meet the danger which threatens Hellenism in Sicily at the hands both of the Carthaginians and of Italian invaders; and the one remedy is a strong bulwark of restored Greek cities (353 E).

Such was the part which Plato played in the actual politics of his day and generation. It was not visionary: it was not impracticable. If he had succeeded, Syracuse would have gained a model constitution, and the Hellenic cause in the West would have been established beyond any danger of overthrow from Carthage and possibly even from Rome. That he failed was not entirely, or mainly, his own fault. He may be accused of want of tact in handling Dionysius; but it needs to be proved that other measures would have had any other result. The obstinacy of Dion was more to blame than the tactlessness of Plato; and more responsible, far more responsible, than either was the social condition of Sicily, which Plato himself knew well (326 B-D), and which, he tells us, nowhere and in no wise pleased him. Luxury was rife: faction was rampant: Sicily was a hot-bed and forcing-house of rapid growths, which could not stand rough weather. Some results flowed from the Sicilian experiences of Plato; but those results are chiefly to be traced in the development of his own doctrine. He had gone to Sicily in 367 with high hopes of founding the city of his dreams, and of training a king to become a philosopher wise enough to regulate human affairs by that living play of Reason, which he held to transcend so greatly the dead letter of the Law. He had begun by believing in the supremacy of Reason and in monarchy: he ended by believing in the rule of Law and the mixed constitution—not indeed as ideals, but as things practicable; not as the Best of which thought was capable, but as that second best which may sometimes be better than the Best. The transition was gradual. The first sign may perhaps be traced in the Third *Epistle* (315 E-316 A), in which he speaks of having worked with Dionysius, probably on his second visit, in 361, in constructing preambles for laws. The suggestion of persuasive preambles to be prefixed to each law is one which Plato elaborates in

detail in the *Laws*. It is his attempt to reconcile the rule of living intelligence with the rule of Law. The preamble, which states the principles on which such an intelligence acts, and on which the law is based, is as it were a bridge between the two. It is also a bridge between the first and the second phase of Plato's political theory. The *Politicus*, which may have been written about 360, shows the definite beginning of the second phase. The rule of Law, we are told, is rightest and best as the second course (297 E); and indeed, since the ideal ruler cannot be found, we must have recourse to prescriptions set down in writing (301 D-E). In the Seventh and Eighth *Epistles* the emphasis on the rule of Law is strong; and here there emerges also the suggestion of Guardians of the Law, which is repeated in the *Laws* (753 D), and the doctrine of the mixed constitution,[1] which is perhaps the cardinal doctrine of this last of Plato's dialogues. The *Laws* represents the culmination of this gradual development. Plato still upholds the ideal as an ideal; but he condescends to the practicable, and abandoning the State of pure Justice with its 'perfect Guardians,' he advocates the law-state with its Guardians of the Law. He still believes that one of the most effective ways of setting in motion such a State is the co-operation of a tyrant with a young philosopher, but the normal constitution which he advocates, when once the State has been set in motion, is a mixture of monarchy and democracy. We shall hardly go wrong in thinking that the constant dissensions of Syracuse, and his own experience of the living intelligence of an actual ruler, had burned into Plato's mind a strong belief in the value of the sovereignty of an impartial and impersonal law. The doctrine of the *Laws* was slowly formed in the crucible of experience. When in extreme old age, in a spirit of kindly tolerance and half-humorous sadness (as when he speaks of men as "merely play-things of the gods"), he wrote the last of his dialogues, he was seeking to fuse into a system both the lessons he had learned from his own Sicilian experiences in 367 and 361, and the morals which he drew from the political vicissitudes of Sicily—vicissitudes in which he had himself been intimately concerned—in the stormy years between 357 and 351.

But Plato was a philosopher, and it was philosophic problems which, even during these years, engaged his attention most closely. There was always, one feels, a struggle in his mind between the philosophic impulse towards abstract thought and a feeling (such as every man who has embraced the student's life can understand) that he ought to come into contact with 'realities,' and to do something in the world of action. Of the two the philosophic impulse was always the deeper, and it was only a feeling of duty which dragged him into

[1] In speaking of the triumvirate mentioned above, Plato suggests that it is a *via media* (μέσον τέμνει: 355 D). We are told by Plutarch, in his life of Dion, that Dion planned a mixed constitution composed of monarchical, aristocratic and democratic elements.

affairs.[1] Through the troubled years of his later life he was writing critical dialogues on points of metaphysics, in which Socratic influence seems to disappear, and in which problems of the critique of pure reason occupy him more than problems of practical reason. Yet he never abandoned the belief that he had found a way of life; and he never ceased to train men to follow it, or to dream of that divine if far-off city, in whose institutions and system of education it should be permanently established as a common possession of men.

The Method of Plato's Dialogues

The form of Plato's writings is from first to last that of the dialogue. The purpose, which leads him to prefer that form, is the purpose which animated Socrates. Socrates had never attempted to instil knowledge: on the contrary, he had always disclaimed its possession. He desired to awaken thought. He was the gadfly who stung men into a sense of truth; he gave the shock of the torpedo-fish; he practised the art of midwifery, and brought thought to birth. He appealed to what was in man's own mind, and trusted it to respond to the appeal: he called to the intelligence of man, believing that it would reply to the call. And so it was with Plato. He desired to show thought at work, and to avoid the mere exposition of its finished product. He was a lecturer and a teacher as well as a writer; and when he set pen to paper, he naturally fell into the vein of writing which discussions with his class in the Academy suggested. Like every genuine teacher, he wished to make men think by his teaching; and, as a writer, he felt that thought would best be awakened in his readers, if they were made to follow the process of the author's own mind. A subject is discussed inside the individual mind in much the same way as it is disputed in a circle of talkers. One view is set up only to be demolished by another, until some final residuum of truth is attained. "One shrewd thought devours another," and finally truth alone remains on the field as a victor. The dialogue is this process of the individual mind made concrete, with its stages translated into persons. It is a higher and more artistic expression of the same tendency, which appears even in the concise lecture-notes of Aristotle.

Dealing with moral problems, Plato naturally started from the *prima facie* views of ordinary opinion. Some character, who with dramatic truth is presented as being in himself, and by his temper and experience, the natural embodiment of one of these views, appears on the stage and gives it utterance. Often such a *prima facie* view will represent one of those lurking principles, which we do not allow to show themselves in our words or in our actions (as we fancy), but

[1] *Cf. Epistle* VII, 328 C-D, and the well-known passage in the sixth book of the *Republic.*

to which none the less we pay an unspoken but ready allegiance. "After all—if I dared think it out, which I must not—pleasure *is* everything": or "after all—if things were as they ought to be, which they are not—I *ought* to have what I am strong enough to get". Brought to the light, and pushed to their conclusions, these lurking principles are shown to involve results which their holder cannot accept: when they *are* thought out, they are impossible. And in their place are installed those principles of moral life, to which we pay a spoken but reluctant homage, and which nevertheless are shown to command the assent of our whole being, when once they are put before us in their full meaning and bearing. Seen in this light, each of the Platonic dialogues is an education of men away from the false if cherished views of the 'first blush' back again, but on a higher level, to the faith by which they act. But it is not always that popular opinion is presented only to be rejected. Opinion is more than a mere inclination to error. By a right instinct it also reaches the truth, though it does not really see the truth which it reaches. A popular opinion may serve as a basis of inquiry, and by gradual stages be developed and refined, until it is made into a perception of the genuine truth. It is, for instance, a true opinion, and worthy of consideration, that the character of a State is determined by the character of its citizens; and from this opinion the *Republic* (after correcting the false opinion that might is right) ultimately takes its start. But the opinion is extended far and wide. Brought into contact with philosophic principles, it is developed and deepened until there results a division of the State corresponding to a division of the human soul which is one of the preconceived principles of Plato's philosophy.

A particular feature of Plato's method is his use of analogy. We have already seen that the use of analogies drawn from the physical world was a characteristic of the transition from the old philosophy of Nature to the new philosophy of man. In the method of Socrates analogies drawn from the arts were regular: he was perpetually enforcing the need of knowledge and of education by the example of the pilot or the doctor. In Plato analogies of both kinds are frequent. His analogies from Nature are chiefly analogies drawn from the animal world. In the *Republic* the analogy of the dog is more than once made the basis of important arguments. By considering the temper of the watch-dog, Plato arrives at the principle which should dictate the choice of guardians; by a comparison of the male watch-dog with the female, he is able to decide that women ought to be guardians as well as men; and it is by an argument from the breeding of animals that he comes upon his peculiar theory of marriage. The same use of analogies from Nature characterises at least one passage in the *Politics* of Aristotle. It is from the analogy of Nature, and the example of the relation of

animals to men, that Aristotle attempts to justify slavery as a natural institution, and to prove the propriety of the slave's relation to his master.

But it is the Socratic use of analogies drawn from the arts which appears most prominently in Plato. The conception of politics as an art, on which the Sophists had acted when they had professed to make politics, like medicine, a subject of teaching, and which Socrates had made into the basis of his demand for knowledge, penetrates almost everything which Plato has to say on this subject. Conceiving politics as an art, he demanded that in this art, as in others, there should be knowledge. This is perhaps the most prominent feature in the whole of his political thought; and the demand that, on the analogy of all other 'artists,' the statesman should know what he practises, lies at the root of the *Republic*. The same conception of politics led Plato still further. Because the artist ought to be unfettered in the practice of his art by a body of rules, he holds that the statesman should ideally be free from the restraint of law, and he advocates a theory of absolute government. Finally, in the strength of this conception he can prove that every ruler is set to rule *propter commune bonum*, since every artist must necessarily work, if he be a true artist, for the betterment of his art's object.

The use of analogy is difficult, and false analogies are easy. It can hardly be denied that Plato did not always surmount the difficulty, or that he sometimes fell into pitfalls. The analogies from the animal world which he employs can hardly be accepted. Such analogies may be used to establish anything—including that doctrine of the right of might which Plato himself explodes in the *Gorgias*—and yet in reality they establish nothing. Man is a spirit: and no valid rules can be drawn for the life of the spirit from the world of brute creation. Nor is the use of analogies drawn from the arts free from criticism. The politician, after all, is not as the physician; and if the one should do his work without the shackles of a text-book, it does not follow that the other should act without the regulation of law. The treatment of the soul involves other considerations than those which guide the treatment of the body, and in many respects, as for instance in his theory of punishment, Plato is not sufficiently alive to their presence. But while we may doubt the validity of a discussion of political questions according to analogies drawn from the arts, we must not forget the cardinal position of Plato. To him politics is not like the arts: it is an art. There is identity rather than analogy.

Chapter VII

THE EARLIER DIALOGUES OF PLATO

THE three great dialogues of Plato which deal with problems of political thought are the *Republic*, the *Politicus*, and the *Laws*. Of these the *Republic* belongs to the first period of Plato's life, and may have been finished by the year (386 B.C.) in which he founded the Academy; the *Politicus* may be dated about 360; and the *Laws*, the last work of Plato's pen, was published posthumously, after his death in 347. But there are a number of early dialogues, prior to all of these, and probably written before 386, which are largely concerned with matters of political theory. These are all Socratic dialogues proper, and they are all concerned with the exposition and vindication of the teacning of Socrates. The *Apology* and the *Crito*, in dealing with the life and death of Socrates, raise problems of the relation of the State to the individual. The *Charmides* and the *Laches*, the one immediately concerned with the virtue of self-control, the other with that of courage, both issue ultimately into larger questions: on the one hand the conception of the unity of virtue leads to the question of the relation of the virtues to virtue at large; on the other, the conception of the State as the promoter of every virtue leads to the question of the relation of moral life to political society and 'political science'—a question also discussed, incidentally, in a passage in the *Euthydemus*. The *Meno*, in discussing knowledge and instruction, necessarily discusses the nature of political knowledge and the possibility of instruction in politics; and a similar problem is also discussed in the *Protagoras*. Finally, in the *Gorgias* Plato is concerned with the value of the study of rhetoric as a preparation for the life of politics; and he is led to attack the basis of false principle which underlies, in his view, the teaching and the practice of oratory.

1. *The Apology and the Crito*

The *Apology* is an attempt to justify Socrates. Suspected by the democrats of being the head of an aristocratic coterie, he had been accused of corrupting the youth and disbelieving in the gods of the State, and he had been brought to trial by his accusers. The problem which confronted him at his trial was the problem of Antigone, when Creon had issued his edict against the burial of her

brother Polynices. Should obedience be paid to the will of the State, or to the sense of justice with which it conflicted? Should he conform by promising silence, and obey the law by such conformity; or should he satisfy his sense of what was right by refusing to refrain from open warning and denunciation? It is the question which has always confronted the martyr; and in the spirit of a martyr Socrates gives his answer. What he has done is the command of God. "Acquit me or condemn me: I shall never alter my ways" (30 A-C). In the name of something higher than the law of the State he defies the law, as men have done in all ages. But this is only one side of the matter; and another and complementary side is presented in the *Crito*. In this dialogue Plato supposes that Socrates is tempted by Crito to escape from the prison in which he lies condemned to death for the answer he has given. If he escapes, he will again disobey the law, which has commanded him to abide in prison, and to die there for his first disobedience. Shall he twice sin against the law? If he had been forced to defy it once for conscience' sake, he will not defy it again for life's sake. He has already done a grievous thing; he has gone about to overturn the law. He will now by his obedience recognise its claims, and as far as in him lies, he will help to establish its sanctity. In teaching this lesson, Plato imagines a dialogue between the Laws of Athens and Socrates. "So you imagine," the Laws inquire of Socrates, "that a State can subsist in which the decisions of the law must yield to the will of individuals?" "But the decision of the law in my case was unjust." "But the law has none the less a double claim on your obedience." Plato proceeds to expound the nature of this double claim. In the first place, the law, regulating as it does marriage and the nourishing and education of children (and Socrates admits that he has no objection to urge against this action of law), is in a real sense the parent of every citizen.[1] By law the citizen is legitimately born into his citizenship; by law he is educated into the capacity to use his citizenship. By the grace of the law he is what he is; and as a child owes obedience to his parents, so, and for the same reason, a citizen owes obedience to the law. It is the law that has made Socrates, and not he himself: shall he quarrel with his maker? The conception is put in a Greek form, but it is a conception eternally true. We are all the product of a number of influences, which have shaped our character and given us our powers—our School, our Church, our State; and we owe a debt of gratitude for the gifts which we have received. It may be our duty to reject them, in the name of something higher; it is also our duty to respect them. The debt must be all the more keenly felt, and the more carefully repaid, if all these influences are, as they were for the Greek, gathered into one, and if they appeal for recogni-

[1] *Cf.* the Ninth of the Platonic *Epistles* (358 A): "Each of us is born not for himself alone: our being is something in which our country has its share, along with our parents and along with our friends".

tion, as to him they did, with a single voice. But there is, Plato feels, still another claim of law upon the individual. If he is bound as a child to repay it for its training of his youth, has he not, when he came into man's estate, entered into an implicit covenant (ὡμολόγηκεν ἔργῳ) to obey the laws?[1] He has liberty under the law to emigrate: if he prefers to stay, at an age when he realises the obligations which he incurs by staying he enters into an agreement (συνθήκη), none the less binding because it is not expressed, to discharge those obligations.[2] There is here no idea that the State is based originally on a contract of individuals, and owes its claims to concessions made in that contract: on the contrary, we have just seen that to Plato the relation of the State and the individual is not one between two parties to a contract, but one between father and child. The Sophists were the 'contractarians,' and Plato was the convinced enemy of their views, teaching rigorously the inevitable nexus which binds man to man in a State, and—as a corollary—the dominant claim of the State upon its members. What Plato means is that every man who regards himself as a member of a State has thereby really and implicitly, though not verbally and explicitly, subscribed to the obligations of membership. He has claimed rights, and has had them recognised: he has acknowledged duties, and is bound to fulfil them. This is implied in membership of the State: it is implied in the membership of any group. No man can belong even to a debating society without incurring obligations of subscription and of orderly behaviour, which are the correlatives of his right to make or to hear a speech. The fact that he does not resign his membership is a standing proof of his acknowledgment of those obligations. This is Plato's contention; and thus the gist of the *Apology* and *Crito* comes to this: "Obey the law, and obey it cheerfully, where a material interest is at stake: otherwise you are a disobedient son and a faithless partner. Disobey it only, and disobey it even then in anguish, when a supreme spiritual question is at issue." It is the exact opposite of Hobbes' view, that a man should submit in matters of conscience, and only revolt to save his life.[3]

2. *The Charmides, Euthydemus and Laches*

While in the *Apology* and the *Crito* Plato writes of the death of Socrates, in the *Charmides* and the *Laches*, and to some extent also in the *Euthydemus*, he writes of his life and teaching, and indicates the methods by which he sought to convey his teaching. The

[1] When an Athenian boy was entered on the roll of his deme as a citizen, he swore an oath: "I will hearken to the magistrates, and obey the existing laws, and those hereafter established by the people" (Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, p. 211).

[2] Compare the argument of modern believers in a social contract, as stated by Hume: "By living under the dominion of a prince, which one might leave, every individual has given a tacit consent to his authority and promised him obedience".

[3] See, on the philosophy of 'resistance,' Green, *Princ. of Pol. Oblig.*, §§ 137-47.

Charmides contains a discussion of the nature of temperance or self-control—a discussion which, in the true Socratic manner, is rather aporetic than didactic, and directed rather to stimulate thought than to give a solution to the problems by which thought is confronted. One of the many definitions of self-control suggested in the course of the dialogue may be noticed here, because it anticipates the definition of justice or righteousness which is given in the *Republic*. Self-control has been defined, "by somebody," as "doing the things which belong to one's own self" (τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν: 161 B). The definition is not accepted, and indeed it is not really discussed. Instead of being taken in its obvious sense, that men should confine themselves to the work of their own particular capacity and station, it is twisted into the opposite sense, and interpreted to mean that each should do everything for himself, and make his own clothes and shoes and everything else that he needs (161 E). This would ascribe temperance to the Highland shepherd of whom Adam Smith wrote in the *Wealth of Nations*, who was ignorant of any division of labour; and Plato readily objects that a temperate State, which must, as such, be a well-ordered State, can hardly be composed of Highland shepherds (162 A). But though it is thus dismissed, the definition recurs in another form in the course of the dialogue, during the discussion of another and alternative definition. Self-control, it is now suggested, may be defined as self-knowledge (τὸ γιγνώσκειν αὐτὸν ἑαυτόν: 165 B). If it is knowledge, Plato makes Socrates rejoin, it must, like other kinds of knowledge, be knowledge of a definite object; and what is that object? The author of the definition replies that it is threefold. Self-control is knowledge of itself: it is knowledge of all other branches of knowledge, which enables its possessor to use them temperately; finally, it is knowledge of the difference between ignorance and knowledge, in virtue of which its possessor knows the limits of his own knowledge (166 E-167 A). The reply contains elements which are genuinely Socratic and genuinely Platonic. The one knowledge which Socrates professed to possess was knowledge of his own ignorance

Nosse nihil dixit se nisi nosse nihil

and we shall find Plato himself, in the *Euthydemus* and again in the *Politicus*, suggesting that there must be a master-knowledge which controls the use and application of all other branches of knowledge, and identifying this master-knowledge with the art of politics or 'political science'. In the *Charmides*, however, doubt is cast alike on the possibility and the utility of a knowledge so vast and embracing. In the first place it is hardly possible; knowledge, as such, must always be knowledge of a specific and related object, and the three objects suggested will scarcely satisfy that condition. If it *had* been possible, it may seem at first sight that it would have been supremely useful. If men could know the difference between knowledge and

ignorance, for instance, both in themselves and in others, they would have an unfailing clue to the conduct of life both for themselves and for those whose lives they controlled. Never attempting themselves to do what they knew that they did not know, but leaving it always to others who knew; never allowing others whom they controlled to do anything they did not know, and could not do well, they would institute a perfect life free from all error. A house inhabited in temperance, after this fashion, would be a house well inhabited: a city governed in temperance would be a city well governed: with error gone, and with truth for guide in every action, men would live well, and living well they would be happy (174 E-175 A). So, at any rate, it seems; and yet it may be true, after all, that such knowledge, as it is not possible, is not really useful either. The perfect control of life by a knowledge perfectly conscious of itself and its own limitations might not ensure happiness: the perfect division of labour, and the limitation of every man to the work of his particular capacity, might not bring a State any nearer perfection. Perhaps the only knowledge that gives happiness is the knowledge of good and evil (174 B); and perhaps this is the knowledge which is self-control. Perhaps, again, even this knowledge is not useful, at any rate in the sense that it produces a definite utility; and self-control, if this is self-control, is after all useless (174 E-175 A).[1]

The aporetic method and conclusion of the *Charmides* must not blind us to the suggestions which it throws out—suggestions which we shall find adopted and carried further in the *Republic*. One of these suggestions recurs, and is amplified, in a passage in the *Euthydemus* (288 D-292 E). This is the suggestion of that master art or knowledge by which all other arts or branches of knowledge are governed. No knowledge, Plato argues, is useful unless we know the purpose for which we should use what we know. Even if a man had knowledge so that he could produce immortality, it would profit him nothing unless he knew how to use immortality. A knowledge of the proper use to which any branch of knowledge should be put is thus a master knowledge fundamentally necessary to human life. A doctor, for instance, knows how to heal; but a further knowledge is needed to decide the use to which his art should be put. He heals both the just and the unjust; and yet it were better and more profitable for the unjust man to die than that he should be healed and live (*Laches*, 195 C-D). Without a master knowledge to control them, other branches of knowledge also are only unprofitable servants; and this knowledge, when it is present, must determine the end for which they are all to be used, and fix, in its light, the occasions and extent of their use. This master knowledge is not rhetoric, or the art of the parliamentarian. A composer of set speeches can make a speech, which may act like a spell on a popular court or assembly;

[1] I have used, in this and the next section, Nohle's *Staatslehre Platos*, c. 3-4.

but he is as ignorant as the doctor of the use he should make of his art, the purposes which it should serve, and the times and seasons when it ought to be exercised (*Euthydemus*, 289 D-290 A). Nor is it again a knowledge of the art of war :[1] the successful general may capture a city or an army, but he has to leave it to the statesman to use the victory which he is not competent to use himself. It may seem, then, as if the master art were that of the statesman, and as if his were the art that is the cause of right action in every State—that sits in the stern of the ship, always steering, everywhere ruling, and making all things serve their appointed use (291 D). Be this as it may, one thing is clear : this master knowledge, like every branch of knowledge, must produce some result. The physician produces health : the husbandman food : what is produced by those who possess the master knowledge ? They must certainly produce wealth, liberty, harmony ; but these are neither good nor bad—they are in themselves indifferent, and everything depends on the use to which they are put (292 C). What statesmen must produce above all—and this is far from indifferent—is knowledge, the true good which gives men happiness. But must they produce knowledge among all, and must it be knowledge of all things ; or must they produce it in some, and must it be knowledge of one thing ? . . . Here the argument ends, once more, as in the *Charmides*, on a note of doubt ; but the suggestion which it makes is none the less important, and we may see Plato moving gradually to the conception of a State perfectly controlled by a perfect knowledge which is a knowledge of the final purpose that each and every human activity should serve—a State in which the statesmen who possess such knowledge communicate it to others in their degree[2]—a State, in a word, which is ruled, as Plato can definitely urge in the *Republic*, by philosopher kings in the light of the Idea of the Good.

The *Laches*, which is concerned with the nature of courage, but which culminates in a theory of the unity of all the virtues, points to a similar conclusion. The sons of two famous Athenian statesmen—Aristides " the Just " and Thucydides the son of Melesias—are introduced, in the beginning of the dialogue, in the act of discussing the education of their sons. They complain that their own education was neglected by their fathers (it is a favourite theme with Plato that Athenian statesmen have always failed to train their sons in their own ways) ; and they profess anxiety about the education of their own sons, more particularly in military exercises. This leads to a discussion of the nature of the virtue of courage, which it is the

[1] The distinction here drawn between the master art and the art of the orator and general is parallel to the distinction drawn in the *Politicus* between the statesman, on the one hand, and the orator, general, and judge, on the other (*cf. infra*, p. 272).

[2] ἐπιστήμην δὲ παραδιδόναι (δεῖ) μηδεμίαν ἄλλην ἢ αὐτὴν ἑαυτὴν (292 D). The knowledge the statesman must produce in his State is thus a knowledge of one thing—the final purpose to be served by each action.

object of any military education to inspire. It cannot be merely blind endurance, which faces risks in ignorance, and without knowing whether the purpose to be served justifies the risks to be encountered. It must be a seeing virtue, based upon knowledge; and it is accordingly defined as knowledge of what is to be feared, and what is not to be feared, both in war and on all other occasions (195 A). Courage, therefore, is no common animal habit: it is the quality only of a few, because there are only a few who can attain the knowledge which is its necessary condition (196 E). That knowledge is elevated to a still higher place in the course of the dialogue. Courage involves judgment of good and evil, whether past, or present, or to come; the brave man must know, in virtue of a *permanent* knowledge, the evils which are to be feared, and the good which is not to be feared. If this be so, courage is not so much a part of virtue as the whole of virtue (199 E): that is to say, it cannot be present, unless the whole of virtue is present. This is because virtue is a unity; and to have one virtue fully, in virtue of a proper knowledge, is to have all the virtues, since such proper knowledge is the full knowledge that ensures full virtue. Thus the end of the dialogue is in a sense nothing, for the differentia of courage has not been discovered; but in another sense it is much, for the unity of virtue has been the conclusion of the argument. And that is a conclusion which squares with the conception of a master knowledge in the *Euthydemus*. He who has virtue, and the perfect knowledge which belongs to virtue, has the master knowledge which will guide the State.[1]

3. *The Meno, Protagoras and Gorgias*

The third and last group of the earlier dialogues of Plato is composed of the *Meno*, the *Protagoras*, and the *Gorgias*. While the group with which we have just been concerned represents the positive side of the teaching of Socrates, this group represents the negative and critical.[2] The three dialogues which it contains are all addressed to actual States and their actual practice; and it is the aim of them all to explain the principles on which such practice, consciously or unconsciously, rests, to prove its shortcomings, and to show the necessity of true and genuine knowledge for any true and proper action. Plato thus brings Socratic theory into contact with actual life; and while, as we shall see, the result of that contact

[1] The argument of the *Charmides* seems to draw a distinction between knowledge of good and evil, and this master knowledge. But the distinction is hardly meant to indicate a difference.

[2] From this point of view the *Charmides*, *Laches*, and *Euthydemus* already suggest the constructive part of the *Republic*—its theory of justice and its emphasis on the rule of philosophy; while the *Meno*, *Protagoras*, and *Gorgias* correspond to the critical part of the *Republic*, and its analysis in Books VIII-IX of actual States and their defects. They enable us, like the later books of the *Republic*, to understand how Plato was driven to the construction of an ideal State by showing, as they do, the actual conditions from opposition to which it sprang, and which it was meant to correct (*cf. infra*, p. 149 n. 1).

is a partial justification of actual life, it is also—less perhaps in the *Meno* and the *Protagoras* than in the *Gorgias*—its condemnation, and the justification of Socratic theory. That theory, Plato urges in these dialogues, is incompatible with States as they are. The death of Socrates is itself the supreme proof that the lessons he taught in his life can never be realised in an actual State. If the State as it stands could put to death the man who simply taught the necessity of the rule of scientific knowledge, *à fortiori* it would never tolerate the actual realisation of that teaching. It follows—and this is the conclusion which we find Plato gradually drawing—that the drastic reformation of the State is the prior condition of any attempt to enthrone philosophy. One must not merely preach the sovereignty of wisdom: one must seek to prepare a highway for its coming, and to ensure the conditions necessary for its rule. And this means the construction of an ideal State, so ordered that knowledge can find its proper place. It means, we may say in a paradox, the building of a Utopia, a city of Nowhere, in order that knowledge may find a place where it can dwell. Short of that, we can only fall back on the State as it stands, in a mood of pessimism, and admitting that there is no place to be found for the rule of knowledge, we must admit that Socrates taught the impossible.

This full conclusion is only attained in the *Republic*, and only attained gradually. As yet Plato is only concerned with the vindication of Socratic teaching against the practice of actual life. Socrates had taught the supremacy of the true or greater knowledge. Why then, it may be asked, do men attain such success as they actually attain without that knowledge; and is that knowledge again of such a nature that it can be made a subject of instruction and communicated to others? The justification of Socrates demands an answer to these questions; and in the *Meno* an answer is attempted. Here political virtue, or the quality of a good statesman, comes under discussion; and Plato admits that experience shows that good statesmen do not transmit their qualities to their sons or successors. Yet they certainly would, if they could; and it would therefore seem, after all, that Socrates was preaching the impossible, and that no instruction can make a good statesman. In reality it is not so. The reason why good statesmen cannot transmit a knowledge of statesmanship is not that it is not transmissible, but that they have no knowledge to transmit. Instead of a reasoned knowledge, connected by a principle, in the light of which it is lucid and teachable, they have only an instinctive tact, a sort of *flair* by which they can travel along the right path, though their eyes are holden from knowledge of the truth.[1] Such an instinctive "right opinion" (ὀρθὴ δόξα),

[1] This is the Socratic doctrine of the Two Knowledges. The lesser knowledge (or "right opinion") is like the statues made by Dædalus. They disappeared unless they were made fast; and right opinion equally disappears, unless it is made fast by a reason-

"which is in politics what divination is in religion," may lead me very far, and "having no understanding," but "being inspired and possessed," they may say and do much that is noble (99 C-D). But right opinion is incommunicable: one cannot teach an instinct; and it has the further defect, that at a crucial moment it may fail. There is no guarantee that it will respond to every fresh problem: under a different set of conditions it may be utterly useless, because it is necessarily connected with mere use and wont. Only a reasoned knowledge illuminated by a principle will meet and master every demand of life; and such a knowledge, so methodised and unified, is a natural subject of instruction which one generation can hand on to another. The *Meno* shows how strongly Plato felt the two great advantages of scientific knowledge—first, that it could meet every emergency, and secondly, that it could be continuously transmitted. With a scientific training statesmen would not need to rely on the inspiration of the moment, and States would cease to depend on the chance of finding an inspired statesman for every crisis. Training would give the statesman continuous inspiration: training would give the State a permanent dynasty of philosopher-kings instead of occasional 'premiers of the people'. It was reflections such as these which impelled Plato towards the whole system of training proclaimed in the *Republic* and actually given in the Academy. The *Meno* foreshadows both, and shows Plato feeling for a way to bring life out of the domain of chance wedded to instinct, and into the sphere of art wedded to knowledge.

Much the same may be said of the *Protagoras*. In this dialogue not only Socrates, but the Sophist Protagoras also, appears as a champion of the position indicated in the *Meno*; and while in its course Socrates is made to confute Protagoras, we ultimately find that he only returns to Protagoras' own view on a higher level. Protagoras begins with the assertion, that as a Sophist or teacher he teaches political art (πολιτικὴ τέχνη), and that by his instruction men became good citizens, "able to speak and to act for the best in the affairs of the State" (319 A). Socrates has two objections to urge against the possibility of any instruction in such a subject. In the first place, while on a subject like ship-building nobody commands an audience in the Assembly who does not possess a technical knowledge of the subject, in affairs of State tinker and tailor are heard with a readiness which implies that there is no technical knowledge of political art. In the second place, there is the old difficulty: statesmen are shown by the experience of Athens to be incapable of communicating their wisdom to their sons. In a long speech Protagoras replies to Socrates' difficulties. Underlying his speech is the assumption, which also underlies all the thought of Plato and Aristotle, that political art,

ing reference to a principle or cause. Once this is done, it ceases to be mere opinion, and becomes true knowledge (*Meno*, 97 D-98 A).

or the quality of acting rightly in the State, is the same as virtue, or the quality of right action in general. Political art in this wide sense Protagoras regards as not, like specific arts, the quality of special individuals, but the common endowment of all mankind. This conviction he states in an apologue, which seems to represent his actual view of the origin of the State (*supra*, p. 62). He believes in a primitive state of Nature, and in the religious origin of political association. In the state of Nature men, while possessed of the arts of life, were destitute of political art, and though they had religion and language, they were almost destroyed by the beasts for want of the strength of political association.[1] Desire for self-preservation drew them into cities; but still destitute of political art, they destroyed their own cities by internal dissension. At last Zeus came to the rescue, and "sent Hermes to them, bearing reverence and justice to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation" (322 C). But while the arts had each been the property of a favoured few, Zeus gave the "political art" of justice to all, since all must share therein, if the cities of men were ever to exist and prosper. And therefore it is that Athenians listen to tinker and tailor in affairs of State.

A deep truth is stated in this apologue. Mere aggregations of men do not form a State: an artificial unity maintained by artificial laws would be no sooner formed than broken. What is needed is the life-breath from on high—a common mind to pursue a common purpose of good life; and it is only in virtue of such a common mind that the State is real and vital. As Protagoras continues his argument, he hits intuitively on further truths. Punishment, he tells his audience, is proof positive that this virtue or political art, which is the life-breath of the State, can be transmitted and taught; for punishment is not the "unreasonable fury of a beast" (324 B) or a retaliation for past wrong; it is administered with regard to the future, and to deter the criminal from doing wrong again.[2] And not only does a preventive means like punishment imply that virtue can be taught: it is clearly explicit in a positive way in the educational system of the State. For youth, there is all the instruction of great poetry, with its admonitions, and its stories of famous men of old for imitation and

[1] Plato again speaks of early man as almost destroyed by the beasts, *Politicus*, 274 B. Similarly Lucretius, in a fine passage on the life of primitive man, speaks of him as often devoured by beasts :—

> Pabula viva feris praebebat, dentibus haustus . . .
> Viva videns vivo sepeliri viscera busto.

[2] For Plato's theory of punishment, *cf. infra*, pp. 354-63. When Plato puts into the mouth of Protagoras a theory of punishment, we are reminded of the story of an argument between Pericles and Protagoras, which lasted a whole day. "One of the participators in the game of throwing a spear had unintentionally killed a bystander: who was the guilty party . . . was it the deviser of the game . . . the competitor, or the spear itself?" (Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, I. 446).

emulation: there is music, which by its harmonies and rhythms makes the soul rhythmical and harmonious; and there is gymnastics, which makes the body fit minister of a virtuous mind. For manhood, again, there is the ensample of the laws, which guide men's conduct not only by repression, but also by positive direction. Nay, outside all set and formal institutions for the teaching of virtue, Protagoras asks, is there not more? "Are not all men teachers of virtue, each according to his ability?" (327 E). Is not society one great school of education? Merely by speaking our language to one another, we teach it unconsciously to the young as they listen; and what is true of our words is true of our deeds. Our lives are so many lessons, and some of us good teachers, teaching good, and some of us evil teachers, teaching evil. "All of us have a mutual interest in the justice and virtue of one another, and that is the reason why every one is so ready to teach justice and the laws" (327 B). And if, as Socrates had urged, some of us are good teachers, and yet produce poor results, is it not merely that we have poor material? If Pericles failed to transmit his virtue and his political ability to his sons, it was not because he lacked knowledge, or even because the knowledge he possessed was such as to be incommunicable, but because the gods do not give their greatest gifts to all men, and they had not given them to his sons. In any case, his sons were educated in the general school of society, and they received the general and communicable gifts of the political art, even if they failed to inherit the inspired statesmanship of their father.

It may well seem that Protagoras has made a good defence both of the Athenian Assembly and of Athenian statesmen.[1] He has defended the Athenian Assembly by the argument, which must always be a fundamental argument for the democratic cause, that in politics there is no distinction of professional and amateur, and that all men acquire a political instinct as readily as they learn their own language or pick up a tune. He has defended Athenian statesmen equally: they are not to blame if they cannot transmit to their sons the torch of a divine inspiration which descends as it lists. Nor has Protagoras only made a good defence of the political practice of Athens: he has said much which appears as Platonic as it is Protagorean. Much of the *Republic*—its whole scheme of education for instance—seems like an expression of the ideas which Protagoras is here made to express. Just as in the *Republic* Plato begins by conceiving the State as an economic organisation, based on division of labour, and then proceeds to lift it to a higher plane, conceiving it as a spiritual association in which each finds righteousness through the fulfilment of his allotted duty, so Protagoras, in the dialogue called by his name, begins by

[1] The leniency of the judgment passed on Athens in the *Protagoras* is remarkable, especially in comparison with the rigour of the *Gorgias*. We have to remember, first, that Plato is stating the views of Protagoras, and secondly, that Protagoras himself, by his own account, is holding a brief, and stating ordinary Athenian views rather than his own (329 A: 352 B).

regarding the State as an institution for the preservation of life, and ends by regarding it as a common structure of mind erected for a common purpose of good life. Men may have the arts of life, and they may add to these some common machinery for the protection of life; but the mere economic association is in its nature selfish, even though the division of labour which it entails seems to promise mutual help, and by this selfishness it will be destroyed, unless the saving grace of 'political art' comes down to men with its gifts of righteousness and reverence.

So far, then, the teaching of Protagoras is confirmed by the teaching of Plato himself in his greatest dialogue. Yet Plato makes Socrates, in spite of all the acknowledged charm of Protagoras' discourse, proceed to its confutation. He is wrong in distinguishing political art from all other arts as a common possession, and in holding that it is automatically communicated in the ordinary life of society: he is wrong, again, in believing that its highest reach is an incalculable and incommunicable instinct. The political art, like other arts, is the property of a few, and requires a special training; and its best practitioners, like the best practitioners of any other art, must possess a reasoned and transmissible skill. Politics is no field for the instinct of the masses and the intuition of statesmen: a State cannot rest on a basis of mere general knowledge (or ignorance) coupled with the saving grace of heaven-born statesmen; it needs philosophic knowledge and the trained ruler on whose presence it can always count if it possesses a system of training. Protagoras is right, it is true, in identifying the political art with virtue, and in holding that virtue can be taught; but virtue is a more arduous thing, and needs a more serious teaching, than he allows. Perfect virtue is not an aggregate of qualities in which all men can participate, each in his different way. It is one and undivided, as Socrates proves by a discussion of the unity of virtue; and it is one in being knowledge. Perfect virtue is perfect knowledge, a perfect understanding of the world and man's place in the world; and therefore it is only the few who can ever attain its possession. But just because it is knowledge, virtue can be taught, in a far truer sense than Protagoras had ever meant: it can be taught by every means, and can only be fully taught by all the means, that give men a perfect understanding of the world. Instead of many phases of virtue, uncorrelated with one another and only dimly understood—instead of the vague inculcation of these in an empiric fashion by the ordinary ways of punishment and education and law and social influence, which appeal more to instinct than reason—Socrates fixes his eyes on virtue one and indivisible, virtue which is perfect self-knowledge and therefore perfect self-mastery, virtue taught by the 'scientific' path of a full education, whose goal is a perfect knowledge of the world and thereby of man and man's place in its scheme.

None of the earlier dialogues of Plato deals so thoroughly, or so drastically, with political questions as the *Gorgias*. The *Gorgias*, so named from the first teacher of rhetoric in Athens, is a treatise on oratory. The interest of Plato in oratory, as we may gather from the dialogue, is twofold. He is partly concerned with the art of rhetoric as a method of education: he is partly concerned with the actual practice of oratory as a means of acquiring office and influence. As a method of education, the art of rhetoric, as it was taught at Athens, dealt not only with form and style, but also with the matter and policy of public speaking. What has been said above of the school of Isocrates may serve to illustrate the scope of such teaching; and we have to remember that Isocrates had founded his school in the first decade of the fourth century, and that it was perhaps already at work when Plato wrote the *Gorgias*.[1] If there was anything which could pretend to dispute with philosophy the position of a master knowledge, or could put forward a rival claim for the guidance of life and affairs, it was this art of rhetoric, which professed to train men for politics, and to make them able to act as well as to speak efficiently (δεινοὶ λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν). While the teacher of philosophy had thus to be vindicated against the teacher of rhetoric, the philosophical statesman had also to be vindicated against the orator statesman of actual Athenian politics. Oratory was rooted in the constitution and life of Athens, partly in the popular law-courts, partly, and even more, in the popular Assembly. With that Assembly supreme in the State, political influence and power naturally went to the orator who could influence and control its decisions. The art of public speaking has a large scope in the representative assemblies of modern States, where the skilled debater wins his way to office on a tide of speeches; but it had a still larger scope at Athens. In a representative Assembly the orator has to satisfy the critical sense of representatives who are in constant session and constantly handling affairs themselves: in the Athenian Assembly the orator had the easier task of charming a popular audience which, whatever its native aptitude or its political experience, was liable to value a telling speech at a very high price. The unofficial 'leader of the people' (προστάτης τοῦ δήμου) depended for his position on the command which he exercised over the Assembly; and Pericles himself, though he held the official position of στρατηγός, owed much of his actual influence to his oratory, and to the fact that "alone of the orators, he left his sting in his hearers". In the *Euthydemus*, and again in the *Politicus*, Plato recognises the orator as a serious rival to the true statesmen, and is at pains to distinguish them from one another. It is natural that he should devote, as he does in the *Gorgias*, a separate dialogue to the subject of oratory, and to the

[1] In any case there were already at work λογοποιοί—rhetoricians who wrote speeches for delivery by others. In the *Euthydemus* (289 D-290 A) Plato professes admiration for their "superwisdom," and speaks of himself as having at one time expected to find in their art the true science or master knowledge that he sought.

discussion of its basic principles and its real value. It is natural, too, that the view which he takes of oratory in that dialogue should be severely unfavourable, and that, writing of Athenian institutions from this angle, he should condemn them much more drastically than he does in the *Meno* or the *Protagoras*.[1]

The general view of oratory which appears in the *Gorgias* is expressed in the form of a classification of the arts which deal with the soul and the body of man. There is an art of the soul, we are told, which has for its object the soul's health; and this art, which is the art of politics, has two divisions, the one legislative, the other judicial. Similarly there is an art of the body, aiming at the body's health, and divided into gymnastics, which regulates the growth and action of the healthy body, and medicine, which heals its diseases. Legislation is like gymnastics; judicial action is like medicine. These are all real arts, and as such they have two characteristics; they are scientific and based on principles, and the aim which they pursue is the benefit and betterment of the objects with which they deal. But there are also sham arts, which are only empiric and spring from mere experience or routine, and whose aim is only to give pleasure and merely to flatter the senses. The dressing of the body to look healthy is the sham or simulacrum which usurps the place of gymnastics: cookery, pretending to care for the health of the body, is a sham which takes the form of medicine. What dressing is to gymnastics, that is sophistry to legislation: what cookery is to medicine, that is rhetoric to justice (464 B-466 A). Sophistry gives false principles to regulate the growth and action of the soul: rhetoric pretends to cure injustice, by making the worse cause appear the better. Thus the art of the great rhetorician Gorgias sinks to the mere pretence of a quack; and thus the oratory which the Sophists generally taught, and esteemed as the essence of political art, is proved to be a mere shadow and simulacrum of the true "judicial" aspect of that art. But underneath this sham of rhetoric there lie the false principles of sophistry. Rhetoric may be distinguished from sophistry; but it is close akin, and it implies the principles which sophistry teaches explicitly.[2] The orator who values, and

[1] Another reason for the tone of the *Gorgias*, which is almost cynic in its bitterness, is the memory of the execution of Socrates in 399. This would seem to suggest that the dialogue was written soon after that date; and W. H. Thompson, in his edition (XXXI., XXXV.-XXXVI.), dates its composition at some time about 395, on the ground that its tone suggests that the condemnation of Socrates was fresh in Plato's mind. But there are other reasons, and especially the close affinities which it presents with the *Republic*, that suggest a later date, somewhere about 390. Gomperz, adopting this date, suggests (*op. cit.*, II. p. 355) that the deep resentment excited by the death of Socrates had been reawakened at that time (1) by the triumph in Athenian politics of a party to which belonged Anytus, the accuser of Socrates, and (2) by the publication, in 392, of the pamphlet of Polycrates directed to the vilification of Socrates and his disciples.

[2] Sophistry (σοφιστική) is the general training of men for the management of a household or city; rhetoric is a particular training in the art of speaking before courts of law and a political assembly. But the part is very like the whole: they meet in the

teaches others to value, mere eloquence, because it makes the worse cause appear the better, is acting on the principle, and inculcating the principle, that external success, howsoever and by whatever means attained, is the aim and endeavour of the soul. The academic teacher of oratory, and the practical statesman who uses his oratorical powers in order to gain office, are alike mere worshippers of power. Both really believe that success is everything: both really hold that power, the consciousness of power, and the satisfaction of wielding power, are the only things that matter.

When the principle implicit in oratory has once been made clear, Plato turns to discuss its truth and its value. He leaves oratory itself in order to discuss the philosophy that lies behind oratory. Two of the persons of the dialogue are made in turn to champion that philosophy. The first of these, Polus, is ready to admit and applaud the principle that success, however it may be attained, is the thing that matters; but he has enough of conventionality left to feel himself bound to admit, that success which is bought at the price of injustice is something discreditable. The second, Callicles, is more radical; he believes that victory should go to the strongest, and the strongest should use all his strength to get victory; and he also believes that, if men will only shed their Philistinism and conventional worship of respectability, there can be no discredit attached to the ruthless pursuit of success. It is Nature's law; and to follow Nature's law can never be naturally discreditable, however much it may offend the proprieties of convention.

To Polus the orator is in the enviable position of the tyrant. A virtual tyrant under the form of a democratic constitution, he can sentence men to death or beggary or exile at his discretion: he can do, in a word, "as he likes" (466 B-E). This leads Plato to inquire into the nature of "doing as one likes," and to draw a distinction between doing as one likes (ἃ ἂν δοκῇ αὐτῷ) and achieving what one desires (ἃ βούλεται). Men do not desire the things they actually do: they desire the end or purpose for the sake of which they do those things. When they take medicine, they do not desire the taking of medicine, but the recovery of health. It is thus possible for a man to do as he likes, and yet not to achieve what he desires: it is possible for a tyrant or an orator to kill or banish, and yet to fail of attaining his desire. The argument is inspired by the view that wrongdoing is involuntary: men always desire some good, and if what they do is bad, they do not achieve what they actually desire, and in that sense their evil act is involuntary.[1] But the argument does not convert

same person and are concerned with the same objects (466 C): the orator and the sophist are the same, or nearly the same (520 A).

[1] When he recapitulates the argument in 509 E, Plato draws this conclusion: "We agreed that no man commits injustice voluntarily, and that all who commit injustice

Polus. He is still inclined to envy the man who can do as he likes in a State, even if, like the tyrant, he has waded through injustice to his throne. After all, he argues, to commit injustice, even if it is discreditable (αἰσχρόν), does not involve any intrinsic evil or harm (κακόν) to the person who commits injustice (474 D). The reply of Plato is that injustice does involve harm, and only involves disgrace because it involves harm. The thesis which is thus raised is the thesis which also forms the staple of the *Republic*—whether the unjust man can ever be said to be in as good or happy a state as the just; whether stripped of all his trappings and "clothes" (523 D-E), and seen, as he must be seen at the last Judgment, in his inward self, he is not full of evil and misery. Injustice,[1] it is argued in the *Gorgias*, is always miserable—never more miserable than when it goes unpunished and uncorrected; least miserable, though miserable still, when it meets with punishment and correction (472 E). Injustice is misery of the spirit, as disease is misery of the body; and it is misery because it means a diseased condition of the soul (νόσημα) in which the balance and order of health[2] (τάξις καὶ κόσμος) have disappeared (504 B), and instability and disorder have usurped their place. To abide in this disease, unattended and uncured, is the crown of misery: to find an escape, through the harsh medicine of punishment, may mean misery of the body, but it also means betterment, and thereby happiness, for the soul. To punish, therefore, is to do good (ἀγαθὰ ποιεῖν): it is to confer a benefit (ὠφελεῖν): and it is more—it is to do the greatest of all goods and to confer the greatest of all benefits. Money-making may free men from want of this world's goods; medicine may free them from disease of the body; justice (δίκη) frees them from the wickedness of their hearts, and helps them most, because it rids them from the worst of all their evils.

do so involuntarily". The view that wrongdoing is involuntary—a recurrent theme of Plato—is discussed once more in the *Laws*. There, too, as in the *Gorgias*, it leads to the conclusion that crime is a spiritual disease; and there, too, it is connected with a theory of punishment which makes it reformatory. Briefly recapitulated, Plato's argument is that wrongdoing is involuntary (*contra voluntatem*) because the will (*voluntas*) is always set towards the good and the happiness which only the good can bring. If men like to do what is contrary to the good, they like to do what is contrary to their will. This is a diseased condition, and it needs reformation and cure by means of punishment. I have sought to discuss the theory more fully in the form in which it appears in the *Laws* (*infra*, pp. 354-63).

[1] Injustice (ἀδικία) means what we should call unrighteousness; or, more exactly (since Platonic justice is *social* righteousness) it is social unrighteousness—the failure to observe the system of social ethics on which a community rests (*cf. infra*, p. 153 n. 2).

[2] The phrase suggests in advance the whole theory of the *Republic*, that justice is a right 'order' of the elements of the soul and a right system of relations between those elements. The view may be ultimately Pythagorean (*infra*, p. 173); and in any case Plato, in one passage in the *Gorgias* (507 E-508 A), seems to connect it with Pythagorean ideas (*cf.* p. 46 n. 4). Here, just as in the *Laws* and also in the *Politicus* (*infra*, p. 281), he suggests that, "as the wise say," a single principle of order (κόσμος) informs earth and heaven and men and gods, holding them all together in fellowship and friendship, in temperance and justice, whence it is that the universe has received its name of Cosmos. This idea of the 'divine concordance' of all things is definitely Pythagorean.

But if this be so, and if punishment be thus reformation, what shall be said of the orator, who practises his rhetoric before a court of law in order to procure escape, not from wickedness but from punishment, for those whose cause he advocates? His art is used to prevent men from receiving the benefit of punishment: it is applied for the purpose of keeping men plunged in the misery of crime. He is the enemy of mankind—or at any rate an advocate for the enemy; and they are wise who never seek to retain his services, but voluntarily go of themselves to the place where they will soonest be punished, and run to the judge as they would to a doctor, in order to prevent the disease of injustice from becoming chronic and making their souls utterly unsound and incurable (480 A).

The culmination of the argument against Polus represents the final condemnation of rhetoric, in the narrower and specific sense of the word, as a forensic art of advocacy which makes the better cause appear the worse before a court of law, and usurps, as a sham based on mere routine, and directed to no higher end than the hearer's gratification, the true judicial art which is based on a real knowledge of the soul and directed to its real benefit. But there is still oratory of the political order to be considered—oratory which is practised before the Assembly rather than a court of law, and seeks to direct the affairs of the State rather than to handle the causes of individuals. To consider this is really to consider not so much rhetoric as the art of sophistry—though, as we have already seen, the two are only divided by the thinnest of walls—the art which, usurping the place of the true legislative art, seeks to lay down false principles for the direction of States. Sophistry and political oratory are at bottom the same; and we must consider, and consider in their most drastic form, the principles of sophistry, if we are to understand the significance of such oratory. The veil of decency with which Polus concealed his real principles must be torn down; we must see face to face, without any concealment, the bare and naked truth.

This new stage of the argument appears with the entry of Callicles into the foreground (481 B). He is a statesman, just beginning to take part in political affairs (515 A), who speaks before the Assembly and practises oratory (500 C). He has, moreover, been educated in the principles of oratory; and finally he is brutally frank, and eagerly ready to look at "things as they are". It is his complaint against Socrates that the argument which he has just developed for the refutation of Polus rests on entire oblivion of the actual facts, and belongs to a topsy-turvy world in which all real values have undergone a process of transvaluation. If one looks at the facts, one must follow the law of nature, and bid convention go hang. Convention is made by the majority, who are

weak, and "make their laws, and distribute their praise and their blame, with reference to themselves and with a view to their own interests" (483 B). Nature herself tells us "that it is just for the better to have more than the worse, and the stronger than the weaker" (483 C). In ordinary life the strong are under the tyranny of the weak, like young lions charmed by the sound of the voice; but "a man who had natural fire enough would trample under his feet all formulas and charms and spells and laws that were contrary to nature's rule: the slave would revolt and become our master, and the light of natural justice would shine out of the darkness" (484 A). This is the real truth; and Socrates will recognise it at once if only he will leave philosophy for higher things (484 C). Philosophy is all very well for youth, as a part of their education: it is of no value for grown men, or for the handling of practical affairs. Grown men must learn by hard experience the hard forces with which they have to deal: practical affairs must be handled not by the "knowledge" of the philosopher, which is only a knowledge of unreal abstractions, but by direct blunt force and power.

This is the reply of Callicles to the ideas of a master-knowledge and scientific training for politics and the rest of the Socratic theory. We have already seen the genesis of Callicles' view, and the basis which he seeks to find for that view, partly in international relations, and partly in the animal world (*supra*, pp. 71-5). It remains to consider the answer which Plato makes to criticism so direct and so powerful. That answer is not only an answer to Callicles, but also a further explanation of his theory. If we accept the principle that strength is the criterion of what is right and good, Plato argues, it follows that the many, who are collectively stronger than the few, are also collectively better; and on that in turn it follows that their view, being the stronger, is also the better. But according to their view equality is better than inequality, and to suffer injustice better than to do injustice; and Callicles, on his own principle, must subscribe to these principles (488 C-489 B). To escape that necessity, he shifts his ground: for the right of strength, which, according to the previous argument, means the right of quantity, he substitutes the right of quality; and he adopts the revised formula that those who are of better quality, or in other words of greater wisdom (φρονιμώτεροι), should bear authority. This is a formula to which Plato has naturally no objection provided that it is understood in a Platonic, and not in an aristocratic sense, and that 'better' means morally better and 'wiser' means wiser in philosophic knowledge: provided, too, that the formula only suggests that the wiser has the right (or duty) to rule, and not the right to make profit by his rule. These provisos are expressed in a parable. If a heap of food had to be distributed, we

should certainly assign the work of rationing to the person most capable; but the person most capable would be a doctor who knew something of our bodies and their needs, and it would not follow, because he had the right of distributing the food, that he received more of it himself (489 B-491 A).[1] Callicles, however, objects to both provisos. When he said wiser, he explains, he not only meant wiser, but also more manly and possessed of more force of character (ἀνδρειότεροι); and when he spoke of bearing authority, he not only meant that intellectual power backed by force of character should rule, but also that it should profit by ruling. A heap of food is only a heap of food, but a State is a State; and no man will handle affairs of State unless it is worth his while and a source of personal profit.[2] This in effect, Plato replies, is a gospel of hedonism. Personal profit really means personal pleasure: to make profit one's object is to live for the sake of pleasure. Callicles is prepared to admit the inference, and willing to urge as frankly as possible the gospel of hedonism. Self-control is a virtue of no account: the best way of life is to let your appetites grow into giants, and to be wise enough, and of a strong enough courage, to satisfy those giants (491 E-492 A). Into the arguments which Plato directs against this hedonistic position we cannot here enter.[3] It is sufficient for our purpose to notice that it is the principle of conduct of an orator-statesman such as Callicles, and that, in Plato's view, all politicians, at any rate of this type, are at bottom selfish egoists.

We have seen that the orator-statesman directs his life to the pursuit of private pleasure: we have now also to see that he lives by seeking to please the multitude. At first sight a contradiction may seem to be here involved. On the one hand, we are told, the politician rules for his own advantage, and despises the interest of the community: on the other hand, it is also maintained, he uses his power to please the community (502 E). The contradiction is only apparent, and it is readily solved if we remember, first that the sovereignty of the people is a fixed limit on the politician's freedom of action, and secondly that to please the community is not

[1] Plato here implies the view, which is stated at the beginning of the *Republic*, that every practitioner of an art, as such, acts for the benefit of the object of his art, and not for his own. If he acts for his own benefit also, he is practising another and additional art—the art of letting his skill on hire to the best advantage.

[2] Callicles thus argues that the ruler should use his authority to get more than others (πλεονεκτεῖν) and for his own aggrandisement. Plato accuses him, in a later passage, of neglect of geometry, and forgetfulness of the fact that geometrical equality is all powerful among gods and men (508 A). This is the doctrine of proportionate equality, which appears again in the *Republic* (p. 256) and the *Laws* (p. 334).

[3] The simplest of these arguments is that the life of self-gratification is a life of constant want. This is the paradox of hedonism. The hedonist tries to fill a sieve: in another metaphor his life is compared to the course of a torrent, whose waters are always coming—and always going; and again, in a more vulgar parable, he is likened to a man who is always itching—and always scratching (494 B-D).

the same as to benefit the community.[1] The politician who is wise in his own generation gets all the private advantage he can, subject always to the limit of popular sovereignty; and he gets it by providing his sovereign with pleasure and being rewarded accordingly. He behaves as a man might behave who made himself the tool of a despot, and attained success by flattering all the worst passions of his master (510 D). The motto of Athenian public life, in Plato's eyes, is simple: "We are under the people: let us flatter our masters". It is the motto of musician, dramatist, and statesman alike. The musician who composes for public contests is only anxious to please his audience. The dramatist, for all his solemn pretensions, pursues the same policy; he writes his plays for the gallery, and if we stripped them of all their accessories of music and rhythm and metre, we should find that they were merely *contiones ad vulgum* (502 D).[2] The statesman follows the example of the music-hall and the theatre, and devotes himself to the *rôle* of a popular entertainer. Craving success and the inebriation of popularity, he forgets his high vocation, which is to leave his fellow-citizens better men than he found them, and to put into their hearts those most excellent gifts of balance and order, which are the only authors and begetters of justice and temperance, and indeed of all excellence and virtue (504 D: 506 D). It is not for him (if he but knew) to swim with the tide, but rather to swim against it. He must be ready to stand and to speak for the best, whether it is palatable or unpalatable: he must strive to coerce men into abandoning their loose desires, dare to 'punish' his country for its good, and seek to force his fellow-citizens to be free (505 B-C).

How different has been the conduct of Athenian statesmen through all Athenian history. Callicles is himself a statesman, and he has frankly expressed the principles on which Athenian statesmen have always acted. It is easy to blame the statesmen of the present; and they certainly deserve all the blame that they get. But that is far from exonerating their predecessors. "When the catastrophe comes" (Plato, writing after the event, makes Socrates prophesy); "when the Athenians lose not only their acquisitions, but also their old possessions, they will blame Callicles, and Alcibiades, and all the statesmen of the day"; but they will forget the original culprits, in whose guilt the statesmen of that day will only be partners (519 A). The old statesmen may have been better in equipping their city with ships and walls and arsenals (517 C): they were no better in adorning it with virtue; and the original corruption of Athens goes back to Cimon, and beyond him to Themistocles, and

[1] In Rousseau's phrase, the *volonté de tous* is not the same as the *volonté générale*, and it is not the same thing to gratify the former as to realise the latter, which it is the true function of the statesman to do.

[2] The argument recurs and is amplified in the *Laws*, where Plato couples "theatrocracy" in the drama with democracy in politics (*cf. infra*, p. 311).

beyond him again to Miltiades (503 B-C: 516 D-E). Even against Pericles, the greatest figure of Athenian democracy, Plato brings the same indictment (515 D-516 C). To get satisfaction for himself, he gave the people their satisfaction. To be the first man in Athens, he gave the people pay, and made them idle and cowardly, loquacious and greedy. He made his fellow-citizens worse men instead of better, as was proved in his own person, when they turned round on him at last in a fury, because things were not going as they wished. If the shepherd of a flock (and the statesman, after all, is only the shepherd of a human flock[1]) had behaved in this way; if he had let his flock get so much out of hand, and made it so savage by his ministrations, that it turned and sought to rend him, we should not regard him as a good shepherd. Can we regard Pericles as a good shepherd? "We cannot point to anybody who has ever shown himself a good man in the politics of this city" (517 A): "there is no single leader of a city who could possibly be unjustly condemned by the city of which he is leader" (519 C). To Plato, in his mood of pessimism, there is no ray of light. All statesmen are shams. They are concerned, and they have always been concerned, with providing confectionery and dresses: they forget, and they have always forgotten, the need of medicine and gymnastic. They are ready to cultivate ministerial and subsidiary arts: they turn away from the magisterial and sovereign art of establishing men in full health of the soul by that right legislation, and that administration of true justice, which are to the soul what gymnastic and medicine are to the body. "They have filled the city with harbours and revenues:[2] they have left no room for justice and temperance" (519 A).

Such is the past of Athens: to-day (Plato makes Socrates say) every man who would be a statesman must ask himself whether he will be the physician of the State, who will struggle and strive to make its members as good as he can, or will be content to play the part of a servant and flatterer (521 A). Socrates has asked himself that question, and given it the only possible answer. He has sought to play the physician, and to make it his motto, "The people is sick: let us heal our masters". He is one of the few Athenians—perhaps the only one—to set his hand to the true and genuine art of politics: he is the only statesman of his generation. He knows that he is sure of his reward. Having done nothing to please, and everything to improve, his masters, he will be brought to trial by the false politicians he has rebuked, "as a physician might be tried in a court of little boys on the indictment of a confectioner," on the

[1] This is an idea which recurs, and is amplified, in the *Politicus* (p. 273).

[2] The word "revenues" is a reference to the tribute of the "allies" of the Athenian Empire. Plato's language seems to imply condemnation of the Empire. It had been lost when he wrote the *Gorgias*; and his reference to "the catastrophe" and "the loss of acquisitions" is a reference to its loss at the end of the Peloponnesian War.

charge of administering unpleasant drugs and prescribing abstinence from sweetmeats (521 D-522 E). And it will be an idle thing in that day to say, "I acted rightly, and I acted for your good". The court will ignore the plea.

Yet we may suspect that, from another point of view, Socrates would have been the first to disclaim the title of statesman. He may have had the right moral purpose; but professing as he did that his only knowledge was knowledge of his own ignorance, he would perhaps have denied that he had the necessary training and experience. The true statesman, Plato maintains, as his master had always maintained before him, must prove that he has been trained to the art of politics; and he must show, too, that he has practised it successfully in little things, before he seeks to practise it at all in greater things. A builder would not be chosen to build a house, unless he had been trained as a builder, and could show proofs of his skill in the shape of good buildings which he had built. Surely the same is true of the statesman, and we may ask that he too shall have been trained in his art, and can show some proof of his skill in his work (514 A-515 A). An orator should never profess to give advice on a subject which he does not himself understand, or to meddle in the Assembly when it is a question of electing an expert to office. Such an election is the business of experts; it is architects and generals, not orators, who should give their advice when an architect or general has to be chosen (455 A-B). It is unwise to try to learn pottery while you are actually making a jar (514 D); and a statesman should have done much in a private capacity to qualify himself for office, before he ventures to assume its burden.[1] We may gather, therefore, that a statesman must possess two attributes—a right moral purpose, which demands unselfishness and makes him work for the betterment of his fellow-citizens; and a full knowledge of his profession, which demands special skill and regular training. The two attributes meet and are united in the conception of government as an art, if the art is a genuine art and not a mere simulacrum. Once the conception is grasped that there is a definite art for the guidance of social life—a master knowledge whose object it is to make men know the purpose that all their activities should serve, and to make them better men thereby: once it is realised that statesmen require a definite training

[1] It is interesting to compare the views of Aristotle. In the *Politics* (III, II. § 10-13; 1281, b 38-1282, a 14) he argues that the man who is not an expert, but has to use what the expert makes, may make the best choice of an expert. Plato's argument shows the Platonic sense of the value of the expert: Aristotle believes less in the expert (whether in politics, or in matters of art), and more in the general judgment. Plato's reference to the proverb about "trying to learn pottery while you are making the jar" may be met by a reference to the principle, which Aristotle lays down in regard to ethics (and also, by implication, in regard to politics): *ἃ δεῖ μαθόντας ποιεῖν, ταῦτα ποιοῦντες μανθάνομεν* (*Ethics*, 1103, a 32-3). This is a principle of profound significance, which justifies, for instance, the extension of the suffrage to classes who do not know how to use it until they have actually used it.

in this art, and everything is gained. Statesmen will cease to be amateurs and improvisers who think that any man can handle politics, and they will train themselves rigorously for their high calling: they will cease to pursue their private advantage, because, being trained to an art and professing an art, they will know that it is their business to work for the good of the object of their art; and finally they will cease to try "to flatter their masters," because they know that their art is a way of betterment, and not a method of flattery.

Such is the argument of the *Gorgias*, and so Plato seeks to prove, not only that virtue, the true political art, is teachable (as he had sought to prove in the *Protagoras*), but also that there is sore need of its teaching. Thus Socrates is finally justified; and thus, too, the way of future reform is indicated. Sham teaching must be overthrown, and sophistry must be refuted. Sham statesmen, who exemplify in their actions the principle of egoism which underlies such teaching, must be banished from the conduct of affairs. Knowledge must take the place of shams—genuine knowledge taught by genuine teaching; and those in whose hearts and minds it is set must guide men's lives in its light. So we turn to the *Republic*, in which all these suggestions are gathered together and systematised, and the true knowledge, the true teaching, and the true statesman are all exemplified. The writings of Plato which we have as yet considered have been either negative or preparatory: in the *Republic* comes the positive teaching, and in it arises the building which these foundations support.

When the *Gorgias* was written, Plato had already present to his mind a political ideal of justice or righteousness, and he was already convinced that its attainment depended on appropriate conditions and an appropriate system of training. But an ideal may serve two purposes. It may be used as a standard of measurement and a canon of criticism, for the judgment and condemnation of existing conditions; or it may serve as a model of reformation and a hope for the future. In the *Gorgias* it is only the first of these two purposes which the ideal of justice is made to serve. It condemns the city of Athens: it does not point the actual way to an ideal city. Plato is clear about principles: he has not yet seen the way to put them in practice. As he says in the Seventh *Epistle*, he has turned aside from politics as they are: he has not yet begun to consider, as he there tells us that he soon began to do, how politics may be made what they ought to be. He is all but convinced that the kingdom of the ideal is not of this world, and the life of philosophy is a preparation for death.[1] The *Gorgias* may almost seem to be his apology for quietism. When Callicles laughs at philo-

[1] *Cf.* the *Phædo*, 64; *cf.* also the *Gorgias*, 493 A and 522 E, *sqq.*, and the passage on the philosophic life in the *Theætetus* (174-6).

sophers who whisper in some obscure corner to a little coterie of three or four striplings (485 E), he perhaps represents Plato's own accusation of himself: when Socrates tells Callicles that, philosopher as he is, he is yet the only statesman of his generation, he is expressing Plato's defence of himself against his own accusation.[1] But a new hope, and a more positive conception of the nature of his ideal, began to dawn. He not only conceived the plan of the *Republic*: he voyaged to Sicily and he founded the Academy. Philosophy, after all, was a way of life rather than a preparation for death. The rest of Plato's life was to be devoted to the communication of that way, and to the realisation of his ideal in the service of mankind.

[1] Thompson, in his edition, suggests that the *Gorgias* is Plato's apology to his friends for his abstention from politics. They had urged him to address himself to a political career, and "to cultivate the power of public or judicial speaking; for . . . it was the want of this accomplishment which sealed the doom of Socrates" (*Introduction*, p. xxxi). On this view the reference in 521 E to the fate of Socrates is a suggestion of the fate which will befall Plato himself if he persists in a life of philosophy and abstention from politics (*cf.* also Natorp, *op. cit.*, p. 15). I should venture to suggest that what troubled Plato more than the fear of public condemnation was the fear of condemnation by his own conscience, if he fell short of the highest, and failed to embrace the life of action, which, as he suspected, might after all be the highest. There is an interesting passage in the *Euthydemus* (306), in which Plato discusses the possibility of combining φιλοσοφία and πολιτικὴ πρᾶξις. He has in mind, it is true, orators of the stamp of Isocrates, who are half-way houses between the philosopher and the politician; but the question he raises has also a wider application.

CHAPTER VIII

THE *REPUBLIC* AND ITS THEORY OF JUSTICE

The Plan and Motives of the Republic

THE *Republic*, which was composed in the maturity of Plato's life, somewhere about his fortieth year, and therefore, better than any other dialogue, represents the fulness of his thought, has come down to us with a double title—"*the State*" (πολιτεία, or, in Latin, *respublica;* whence the name by which it generally goes), "*or concerning Justice*". In spite of these two titles, it must not be assumed that it is a treatise either on political science or on jurisprudence. It is both, and it is yet more than both. It is an attempt at a complete philosophy of man. Primarily, it is concerned with man in action, and it is therefore occupied with the problems of moral and political life. But man is a whole: his action cannot be understood apart from his thinking; and therefore the *Republic* is also a philosophy of man in thought, and of the laws of his thinking. Viewed in this way, as a complete philosophy of man, the *Republic* forms a single and organic whole. Viewed in its divisions, it would almost seem to fall into a number of treatises, each occupied with its separate subject. There is a treatise on metaphysics, which exhibits the unity of all things in the Idea of the Good. There is a treatise on moral philosophy, which investigates the virtues of the human soul, and shows their union and perfection in justice. There is a treatise on education: "the *Republic*," said Rousseau, "is not a work upon politics, but the finest treatise on education that ever was written". There is a treatise on political science, which sketches the polity, and the social institutions (especially in respect of property and marriage), which should regulate an ideal State. Lastly, there is a treatise as it were on the philosophy of history, which explains the process of historical change and the gradual decline of the ideal State into tyranny. But all these treatises are woven into one, because all these subjects as yet were one. There was no rigorous differentiation of knowledge into separate studies, such as Aristotle afterwards suggested, rather than himself made.[1] The philosophy of man stood as one subject, con-

[1] He wrote separate treatises, the *Metaphysics*, the *Ethics*, and the *Politics*. But political science and moral philosophy, at any rate, are in his eyes still one and in-

fronting as equal or superior the other subject of the philosophy of nature. The question which Plato set himself to answer was simply this: What is a good man, and how is a good man made? Such a question might seem to belong to moral philosophy, and to moral philosophy alone. But to the Greek it was obvious that a good man must be a member of a State, and could only be made good through membership of a State. Upon the first question, therefore, a second naturally followed: What is the good State, and how is the good State made? Moral philosophy thus ascends into political science; and the two, joined in one, must climb still further. To a follower of Socrates it was plain that a good man must be possessed of knowledge. A third question therefore arose: What is the ultimate knowledge of which a good man must be possessed in order to be good? It is for metaphysics to answer; and when metaphysics has given its answer, still a fourth question emerges. By what methods will the good State lead its citizens towards the ultimate knowledge which is the condition of virtue? To answer this question, a theory of education is necessary; and indeed, since a readjustment of social conditions seems necessary to Plato, if his scheme of education is to work satisfactorily, a reconstruction of social life must also be attempted, and a new economics must reinforce the new pedagogics.[1]

It has been suggested[2] that the mainspring of the *Republic* is Plato's aversion to contemporary capitalism, and his desire to substitute a new scheme of socialism. This would make of the *Republic* an economic treatise; and the author of the suggestion enforces his point by attempting to show that in contemporary Greece the struggle between oligarchy and democracy represented a struggle of capital and labour,[3] and that in Plato we find a vivid sense of the evils of this struggle and an attempt to deal with those evils by means of socialistic remedies. Hence, he thinks, comes his attack on private property, and his proposal to abolish the use of money.[4] Aristotle, equally with Plato, is brought into line with this theory; for though Aristotle does not commit himself to the socialistic attack upon property, he nevertheless (it is urged) advocates a simple economy

divisible. It must be admitted, however, that the separate treatises on ethics and politics tend to diverge not only in name, but also in spirit. The realistic tone of Books IV-VI of the *Politics* shows little trace of an ethical point of view.

[1] In brief, the *Republic* is a "philosophy of mind" in all its manifestations; and the modern work with which it may most easily be compared is that section of Hegel's sketch of philosophy entitled the "philosophy of mind," in which he discusses the inner operations of mind as consciousness and as conscience, its external manifestations in law and in social morality (the sphere of the State), and its "absolute" activity in art, religion, and philosophy.

[2] Pöhlmann, *Geschichte des antiken Kommunismus und Sozialismus.*

[3] πλοῦτος καὶ πενία (*Republic*, 421).

[4] But Plato says that it is the guardians alone who will have neither silver nor gold; from which one may gather that the other classes of the State use the precious metals (417 A).

in kind (*Naturwirthschaft*); he attacks money in the very spirit of Plato; and he even goes beyond Plato in attacking trade as a species of robbery. The objection which naturally occurs—that such a theory means the importation of modern socialism, which is a revolt against a complex system of production, into the far simpler conditions of the economic life of the Greeks—is met by the reply that those conditions were not simple. Credit was highly developed in the city-state: over-seas trade was abundant in a city like Corinth. Usury was not merely the loan of money to needy farmers, but a vast system running through commerce; and the attacks of philosophers on interest (*Zins*) indicate a socialistic propaganda, such as is to-day connected with attacks upon profits (*Kapitalzins*). Whatever may be the truth of the view of Greek economics which such a theory postulates, it is difficult to agree with the view of Greek political thought which it suggests, or to admit that the reform of the State proposed by Plato is meant as an economic reform of an economic evil. Plato may touch upon economic questions; but he always regards them as moral questions, affecting the life of man as a member of a moral society. He may speak, for instance, in praise of division of labour; but we soon learn that division of labour concerns him, not as a method of economic production, but as a means to the moral well-being of the community.

But while we may disagree with the application of considerations of political economy to the *Republic*, we must none the less admit that its practical motive is a fact. It is written in the imperative mood—not by way of an analysis, but rather for warning and counsel. The *Republic* is in many respects a polemic—a polemic directed against current teachers and the practice of contemporary politics. The teachers against whom it is directed are the younger generation of Sophists, of the type already portrayed in the *Gorgias*. It was they, and not Socrates, who in Plato's view were the true *corruptores juventutis*, by the lectures they gave and the training in politics they professed to give; and if Greece was not to follow in the paths they had indicated, their hold on the young must be destroyed, and their teaching must be refuted. They had preached (so it seemed to Plato) a new ethics, or 'justice,' of self-satisfaction; and they had tended to revolutionise politics accordingly, by making the authority of the State a means to the self-satisfaction of its rulers. In opposition to such tenets Plato taught a conception of justice as a quality of the soul, in virtue of which men set aside the irrational desire to taste every pleasure and to gain a selfish satisfaction out of every object, and accommodated themselves to the discharge of a single function for the general benefit; and he taught a corresponding conception of politics which made the State no longer the field for the self-satisfaction of its ruler, but the body of which he was a part and the organism in which he had a function. No longer should

individualism infect the State: on the contrary, a spirit of collectivism (for the Platonic reaction runs to its extreme) should permeate the individual. No longer should the ruler use the State for his own ends: the State should demand of the ruler, if it were necessary, the sacrifice of his private ends, if indeed he had ends distinct from those of the State, to the interests of the general welfare. But in truth there was no such necessity, and there was no such distinction. In a true State the individual can secure his own ends in securing those of his fellows; "he will have a larger growth, and be the saviour of his country as well as of himself" (497 A). The old harmony of the interests of the State and the individual, interrupted by the teaching of the Radical Sophists[1] (as it was also interrupted by the teaching of Cynics and Cyrenaics), is thus restored in the teaching of Plato, but restored on a new and higher level, because it has been elevated into a conscious sense of harmony. In this connection Plato, radical and reformer as he may elsewhere appear, is conservative enough. It is his mission to prove that the eternal laws of morality are no mere 'conventions,' which must be destroyed to make way for a *régime* of 'nature'; but that they are, on the contrary, rooted beyond all possibility of overthrow in the nature of the human soul and in the system of the universe. That is why a psychology of man and a metaphysics of the world enter into the plan of the *Republic*. Its author has to show that the State cannot be regarded as a chance congeries of individuals, to be exploited by the strongest individuality; but that, on the contrary, it is a communion of souls rationally and necessarily united for the pursuit of a moral end, and rationally and unselfishly guided towards that end by the wisdom of those who know the nature of the soul and the purpose of the world.

But this, which is the true idea of the State and its natural and normal condition, was exactly what, in Plato's view, contemporary States were not. The spirit of excessive individualism had infected not only theory, but actual life; and the Sophists were only popular, because they had caught what was in the air.[2] The States of contemporary Greece seemed to Plato to have lost their true character, and to have forgotten their true aim. In opposition to their actual character,

[1] These Sophists did indeed reconcile State and individual, by making the State a tyranny working for the satisfaction of one individual. They reconciled it, however, from the wrong end (if indeed they can be said to have reconciled it at all), when they adjusted the State to one individual, instead of adjusting all individuals to the State. Yet it shows how closely the State and the individual were connected, even by the revolutionaries, that individualism, instead of seeking to destroy the State, should have attempted to recreate it after its own image. The Sophists were not anarchists, even in their wildest flights.

[2] "Do you really think that our youth are corrupted by Sophists, or that private teachers . . . corrupt them in any degree worth speaking of? Are not the public who say these things the greatest of all Sophists?" (492 A). "Sophists . . . in fact teach nothing but the opinion of the Many, that is to say, the opinions of their assemblies; and this is their wisdom" (493 A).

and to the aims they actually pursued, he turns as definitely radical, as in opposition to sophistic views he shows himself conservative. Thinking mainly of the Athenian democracy in which he lived (and at the hands of which Socrates had died), he finds in contemporary politics two great and serious flaws.[1] One is the ubiquity of ignorance masquerading in the guise of knowledge: the other is a political selfishness which divides every city into two hostile cities, standing "in the state and posture of gladiators" over against one another. To create efficiency in the place of amateur incompetence—to replace selfishness and civil discord by harmony—these are therefore his aims; and 'specialisation' and 'unification' are therefore his watchwords. To these two aims the political teaching of the *Republic* is addressed; and as means to these ends even its apparent eccentricities, such as the advocacy of community of wives, acquire meaning and find justification.

Ignorance was to Plato the especial curse of democracy. Here, instead of the professional, the amateur was predominant. In Athens especially democracy seemed only to mean the right divine of the ignorant to govern wrong. Any man might speak in the Assembly and help to sway its decisions: any man, whatever his capacity, might be appointed to executive office by the chance of the lot. Besides the inefficiency which it entailed, and the parade of a false equality which it involved, such a system was to Plato unjust. Justice meant, in his eyes, that a man should do his work in the station of life to which he was called by his capacities. Everything has its function. An axe which is used to carve a tree, as well as to cut it down, is an axe misused (*cf.* 353 A); and a man who attempts to govern his fellows, when at best he is only fit to be a tolerable craftsman, is a man not only mistaken, but also unjust—doubly, indeed, unjust, for not only does he not do his own proper work, but he shoves the better man aside.

But nothing impressed Plato more in contemporary politics, and nothing more surely drove him along the path of reform, than that violent spirit of individualism, which sought to capture the offices of

[1] Plato's criticism of contemporary politics is to be found in the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic*. Nohle (*Die Staatslehre Platos*, p. 101) remarks with justice that Plato depicts actual States *after* he has sketched his ideal State; while nevertheless, in the actual development of his thought, the study of actual States came *before* the construction of the ideal and served as an incentive to its construction. Moreover the defects of the actual showed him what to seek in an ideal; and in this sense his critique of the actual controls and determines his construction of the ideal. Indeed, it may almost be said that the elements in his ideal State which seem most idealistic are in a sense most realistic: they are the results of an ardent impatience with the elements of actual life which he had thoroughly studied, and of which he thoroughly disapproved. His communism, for instance, is largely the result of a lively sense of the evils actually inherent in a ruling class which had its own economic interests, and used its political position to advance those interests.

the State for the better fulfilling of its own selfish purposes, and divided every city into two hostile camps of rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed. This was the special vice of oligarchy. The ruling body always tended to dissensions within its own ranks; and it was always in a state of opposition to its subjects. An oligarchical city was a city set in two camps, each spying for an opportunity against the other. And the root of all evil was the love of money. It would have been well if this passion had been confined to private life; but it infected politics. The rich who sought to be still richer monopolised office for the sake of the advantage which its corrupt use might give them in their private enterprise: they seized the authority of the State for the sake of the 'spoils' which it might bring.[1] The State, whose essence it is that it should be a neutral and impartial arbitrator between the different interests of different classes, became itself the tool of one of these classes. The government, instead of binding class to class, merely accentuated their differences by adding its weight to strengthen one class against the rest. No wonder the State was divided against itself, or that, as Plato says, in every State there were two separate States. "Not one of them is a State, but many States; for any State, however small, is in fact divided into two—one the State of the poor, the other that of the rich—and these are at war with one another" (422 E).[2]

Political selfishness was not the fault of oligarchies only. Democracy itself was not exempt from this vice. Its supporters indeed viewed it as the true State, where man was equal to man, and an impartial law ruled all—a State which served no particular interest, but did justice to every class. Democracy represented the whole community: oligarchy represented a part. Democracy made room for the rich in finance, the wise in council, the masses in decision.[3] But what struck Plato, and indeed Aristotle, was, that the citizens of a democracy not only paid themselves from the coffers of the State by the wages which they received for political services, but also used their authority to pillage the rich, confiscating their estates upon spurious issues, or plundering them more subtly by heavy 'liturgies'. They too, like the governing class in an oligarchy, made politics into a source of economic gain. It is this confusion of economics and politics,

[1] *Cf.* Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279, a 13-15 (III. 6, § 10), "nowadays men seek to be always in office for the sake of the advantages they can gain from the public revenues and from office".

[2] This view of the "two States" is one that recurs in Plato. "Such a State," he says of oligarchy, "is not one, but two States, the one of poor, the other of rich men; and they are living on the same spot and always conspiring against one another" (551 D). Similarly in the *Laws* he urges (712 E-713 A) that the ordinary State has no constitution: it is a mere territory divided into parts one of which is master and the other is slave. The Platonic view of the two States within each State naturally suggests Disraeli's phrase of the "two Nations," and the modern Socialist idea of the "class-war".

[3] Thucydides, VI. 39 (the argument is that of Athenagoras, the democratic leader at Syracuse).

alike in oligarchies and in democracies, that lends to Greek civic strife its fury. Political struggles may be moderate, and the combatants may act by legal form: it is the social war in which passions are as bitter as gall. Greek civic strife (*στάσις*) meant such a social war; and constitutional opposition readily turned into a Jacquerie.[1] Hence it became the mission of political philosophy, in the hands of Plato, to rehabilitate a strong and impartial authority, which should mean, not the rule of the rich over the poor, or of the poor over the rich, but of something either above or at any rate combining both. Whereas "men came to public affairs hungering for their own profit thereby," and, "as a result, struggles for office arose which grew into civil war,"[2] there must be unselfish government and civic harmony.

There were, then, two factors—a certain amateur meddlesomeness (*πολυπραγμοσύνη*) which its friends called many-sidedness (*εὐτραπελία*), characteristic of democracy, and a political selfishness, resulting in constant disunion, characteristic both of oligarchy and of democracy—which suggested to Plato the direction of future reform. It is from the common error of amateurism that Plato starts in constructing his ideal state; and in opposition to the gospel of many-sidedness he enunciates that of specialisation. The Sophists had, to some extent, been apostles of many-sidedness; and Hippias of Elis, as we have seen, had given a practical demonstration of its meaning, when he appeared at Olympia in ring and cloak and shoes of his own making. Yet they had also felt that it was well for a man if he had been trained in the profession he intended to pursue; and they had also attempted to give some training themselves for the profession of politics. Socrates, again, had insisted upon knowledge as the necessary basis of action; and the Socratic conception of government, as an art which involved special knowledge, had especially influenced Plato. Nor were the tendencies of actual life altogether adverse to a doctrine of specialisation. The professional soldier and the professional orator were already beginning to appear. The victory of a professional force of light armed troops in 394 B.C. had already shown the efficiency which the new tendency could impart; and though a Phocion might, at a still later day, appear as both orator and soldier, he was noted by his contemporaries as an exception. It was the day of Iphicrates and Isocrates—the day in which professional training had replaced the fresh improvisations of a Themistocles or a Cleon. But the teaching of Plato goes far beyond any preceding teaching or tendencies. He divides his ideal State into three classes, the rulers, the fighters, the farmers—the men of gold, the men of silver, and the men of iron

[1] *Cf.* the picture drawn by Thucydides of *στάσις* at Corcyra: "And the cause of all these things was the pursuit of office for reasons of greed and ambition" (III. 82).

[2] *Republic*, 521 A. Ordinary rulers, Plato suggests (416 A), are like "watch-dogs, which from want of discipline, or hunger, or some evil habit or other, turn upon the sheep and worry them, and behave not like dogs but wolves".

and brass. Each of these has its appointed function, and each of these concentrates itself entirely upon the discharge of that function. Government, defence, sustenance—the three necessary functions of the State—are all made into professions and assigned to professional classes. It is only with the governing and fighting classes that Plato is really concerned; but these he is careful to train for their work by every means in his power. Primarily he trusts to an education which shall train them thoroughly for their duties: secondly, not quite content with spiritual, he has recourse to material means. He suggests a system of communism so ordered, that it shall set the time and the minds of these classes free from material cares, and shall enable them to give themselves fully to the acquisition of knowledge and the discharge of their function in the community. He deprives both the administration and the army of private property, and seeks to consecrate them to their public duties by freeing them from any temptation to engage themselves in other interests.

The way of specialisation was also to Plato the way of unification. If a separate class were appointed to the work of government, there would hardly be any room for the old struggle to capture the government. If each class abode within its own boundaries, concentrated upon its own work, no class would readily come into conflict with another. Civil dissension had been rendered possible by the want of specialisation. Because there was no proper government ready and able to do its work, there had been the conflict of selfish aspirants for office: because there had been in every State a number of men with no settled function or regular place—men who had more than one place, or no proper place at all—there had been all the jostling and turbulence which had culminated in civil war. With specialisation these things would cease: each class would work at its appointed function in contentment: selfishness would disappear, and unity would pervade the State. Those who confine themselves to the discharge of their function cannot be selfish. Selfishness (πλεονεξία) consists in going outside one's own sphere, and trespassing upon that of another; and a governing class duly trained in its proper duty will never commit such trespass. But Plato provides a further guarantee than training. Not all who have been trained for government are allowed to join the governing class. To make the assurance of unselfishness doubly sure, he reserves office for those, and only those, who, under a system of trials and temptations, have held firm to the belief that the weal of the State is their own weal, and its woe their own woe. And besides these spiritual means—besides this training for a special work, and this selection of those whom the special training has shown to be most unselfish—there is finally the material guarantee of communism. Rulers who have no home, no family, no possessions, have no temptation to selfishness:

they have nowhere to carry their gains, nobody upon whom to spend them, no interest in making them. [1]

The conclusion of the whole matter would seem then to be this, that each should do his own appointed work in contentment. But this in Plato's eyes is justice or, in the other words, the true principle of social life; and therefore the *Republic* is also called "a treatise concerning justice". Its purpose is the substitution of a true conception of justice for the false views which common error and sophistic teaching had contrived to spread. Whether he is combating the theory of the Sophists, or seeking to reform the actual practice of society, justice is the hinge of Plato's thought, and the text of his discourse. It remains therefore to inquire, what were the views of justice which he found current, and what were the reasons for which he rejected those views: in what way he justified the conception which he advocated, and what were the results to which that conception led. In the course of this inquiry, we shall be expounding in detail what has already been sketched in outline—the polemic of Plato against the current conceptions of justice, and his reconstruction of the State with a view to realising his own conception of its nature. We shall see how, beginning as it were dimly with the practical principle of specialisation, Plato throws fresh and fresh lights on its meaning, until finally we realise that in specialisation justice itself may be found—for justice, being seen, is nothing more and nothing less than man's performance of the part which the purposes of society demand that he shall play.

The Prima Facie Theories of Justice

(1) *The Theory of Cephalus: Traditionalism* (327-336 A)

The first conception of justice [2] to be considered in the *Republic* is that which underlies traditional morality. The exponent of this

[1] "Both the community of property and the community of families . . . tend to make them more truly guardians; they will not tear the city in pieces by differing about 'mine' and 'not mine' . . . but . . . they all tend towards a common end" (464 C-D).

[2] It must be noted that no legal significance attaches to "justice" in Plato's use of the word. Justice (δικαιοσύνη), along with courage, self-control and wisdom, is one of the four virtues which constitute moral goodness (ἀρετή). Such goodness is the quality both of an individual soul and of a community of individuals; and justice, therefore, is also a quality of both. It is thus one of the constituent parts both of individual morality and of social morality; but it is with *morality* rather than law that it is connected in either form (*cf. infra*, p. 179).

While justice is, properly speaking, a *part* of goodness, it becomes in the *Republic* almost identical with goodness itself. The 'goodness' or excellence of the individual soul is practically identified with the 'justice' of the relations of the elements of the soul (reason, spirit and appetite): the soul which has *τάξις καὶ κόσμος* among those elements, and is thereby just, is also good. Similarly the goodness of a society is practically identified with the justice of the relations of its members: the State which has *τάξις καὶ κόσμος* among its members, through the faithful abiding of each in his station, and is thereby just, is also good. In the *Laws* it is another virtue—that of self-control

conception is first of all Cephalus, a metic (or resident alien) living in the Peiræus, and the father of the orator Lysias, in whose house the scene of the dialogue is cast. To Cephalus, looking back over a long life, and thinking of the old ways and opinions, justice seems to lie in speaking the truth and paying your debts (331 C). Departing "to look after the sacrifices" he makes his son and heir Polemarchus the heir of the argument; and Polemarchus, faithful to his father and the tradition of the elders, champions the old view of justice in a slightly altered form, which makes it consist in the giving to each man of what is proper to him (332 C). The use of the word "proper" leads, in the course of the discussion, to the assumption that justice is an art—an art which gives good to friends, and evil to enemies—and this assumption overturns the definition adopted by Polemarchus. If justice is an art or capacity, it is, like other arts or capacities, capable of doing two opposite things. The doctor who has most capacity in preventing has also most capacity in creating disease: the best guardian of a camp has also the greatest capacity for stealing a march on the enemy. If justice is a capacity or accomplishment, it is capable, no less than medical skill or military ability, of being used in opposite directions; and the just man will be equally able to guard or to steal a deposit, and to be just or unjust at will.[1] Again, it is easy to speak of giving good to friends and evil to enemies; but what if the friend is only a friend in seeming, and an enemy in reality? Must one still rigidly follow the definition, and do him good, or may one use discretion, and do him evil? And finally, whatever may be said about doing good to friends, is it ever just to do evil to enemies? Men who are injured deteriorate; and it can hardly be just to make a man worse than he was. Faced by these consequences, Polemarchus is led to abandon the definition of justice as the art of giving good to friends and evil to enemies; and Plato concludes the argument with the suggestion that the definition must have been invented by a tyrant like Periander, or an absolute monarch like Xerxes, "with a great opinion of his own power"—a suggestion that prepares the way for the definition of justice as "the interest of the stronger".

Justice, or righteousness (Plato implies in this argument), is after all not an art, in the sense of a technique which may be empirically acquired, and used at will in one or other of two opposite directions. It cannot be empirically acquired, for it is not a matter of the lesser knowledge, which comes by use and wont, but of the greater knowledge which is based on a grasp of principle, and clinched by a reasoning reference to a cause. Tradition, which is simply inherited empirical opinion, fails in the face of any difficulty; its ancient

—which is practically identified with goodness (*cf. infra*, p. 297); but here too, as in the *Republic*, one of the virtues is made tantamount to the whole of virtue. Virtue (we must remember) is a unity; and the parts of virtue, whether justice or self-control, involve the whole.

[1] This is a reference to the doctrine of a δύναμις τῶν ἐναντίων; *cf. supra*, p. 89.

maxim of doing good to friends and evil to enemies, or, as Hesiod pithily wrote,

καὶ δόμεν ὅς κεν δῷ καὶ μὴ δόμεν ὅς κεν μὴ δῷ

ceases to guide us as soon as we become uncertain (and that we are sure to do), who is our friend and who is our foe, and who has given and who has not given. Nor, again, can justice be used at will in opposite directions. It is a quality of the soul and a habit of the mind, rather than a technique; and it is a quality and a habit of such a character that he who has once attained it can only act in one way, which can never be the way of injuring others, or of causing deterioration in any man, whether friend or enemy. And lastly, true justice connotes the idea of service, and that in turn connotes the idea of a social whole to which that service is rendered. Traditional opinion is blind to this implication. It conceives justice merely as a relation between two individuals, and a relation based on individualistic principles. The type of which it thinks is the self-centred individual, with abundant means at his disposal, who can requite his friends and retaliate upon his adversaries. That is why Plato regards the traditional opinion of justice as the sort of thing which a Periander or a Xerxes would invent; and that is why, he seems to suggest, it passes into the revolutionary opinion which Thrasymachus is next made to expound.

(2) *The Theory of Thrasymachus: Radicalism* (336 A-354 C)

While Cephalus and his successor in the argument have represented the traditional morality of ancient Greece, Thrasymachus represents the new and critical views of the later fifth century. He is treated by Plato as the spokesman of the Radical Sophists, and as such he is made to take up two positions and driven from each in turn. (1) Understanding by justice (what is understood throughout the *Republic*) the standard and rule of action for a man living in a community, he defines it as "the interest of the stronger". In other words, might is right; a man ought to do what he can do, and deserves what he can get. This is to identify *jus* with *potentia*, after the manner of Spinoza; but while Spinoza, somewhat inconsistently, limits the *potentia* of each individual by the *imperium* of a State which enforces a peace consisting in rational virtue, Thrasymachus logically enough argues that the *imperium* of a State merely lays down as the law whatever is to its own interest, and simply makes into justice, in virtue of its superior power, the right which it claims as the strongest. The standard of action for a man living in a community is thus, according to Thrasymachus, the will of a ruler who wills his own good; and this, he maintains, is what one must inevitably see, if one looks at the facts with an unblinking eye. For while every man acts for himself, and tries to get what he can, the strongest

is surest to get what he wants; and as in a State the government is the strongest (or else it would not be the government), it will try to get, and it will get, whatever it wants for itself.

(2) But if justice thus consists in whatever is for the ruler's interest, it follows that, for everybody other than the ruler, justice may be further defined, according to a popular definition, as "another's good". To be "just," in the popular sense, is to be a means to the satisfaction of the ruler: to be "unjust," in the popular sense is to act for the satisfaction of oneself. But there is no reason, in the view of Thrasymachus, why it should be just for the ruler to get his own way, and yet, at the same time, unjust for others to do the like. What is true of the one is true of the rest: the real standard of action for any sensible man is to satisfy himself; and therefore, if we use the terms in their conventional sense, injustice, and not justice, is the real virtue and the true wisdom for all sensible men. Injustice is a better thing than justice; the unjust man is a wiser man than the just. The truly wise man is he who will be just, and satisfy his ruler's selfish desires, if he must; but who, if he can, will be unjust, and satisfy his own. In a word, the ordinary sense of moral terms must be inverted, if they are to correspond with 'reality'.

We have already seen (*supra*, p. 72) that the view of Thrasymachus presents an ethical nihilism more thorough-going in reality, if in appearance less drastic, than the new master-morality which Callicles is made to expound in the *Gorgias*. Both Callicles and Thrasymachus are representatives of the revolt of an awakened self-consciousness against the traditional morality in which it has hitherto passively acquiesced, but which it now brings to the bar of its new sense of self for judgment. The new sense of individuality is keen and urgent; and it finds in traditional morality nothing more than a number of limitations on its play. In the hands of Callicles it is made to enunciate, with a fresh naïveté, a new doctrine of justice —to do whatever one can, and to seek whatever one likes. In the hands of Thrasymachus it becomes more cunning and saturnine: its doctrine is a doctrine that justice consists in obeying authority wherever one must, and in pleasing oneself wherever one can. Those who, like Plato, seek to expose the errors of this extreme individualism must answer by urging a truer conception of the nature and the 'rights' of human individuality. They must show that the self is no isolated unit, but part of an order with a station in that order; and that fulness of expression and true consciousness of pleasure are only to be found in doing one's duty in the station to which one is called. This is the ultimate answer which Plato gives, and writes the *Republic* in order to give. For the present, however, he satisfies himself with a logical refutation. He takes the two positions which are advanced by Thrasymachus—that a government governs for its

own advantage, and that injustice is better than justice—and deals with them each in turn. To the former view he opposes the Socratic conception of government as an art. All arts, he argues, are called into existence by defects in the material with which they deal. The physician attempts to remedy the defects of the body; the teacher those of the mind. The aim and object of every art is the well-being of its material: the perfect teacher, for instance, is he who has remedied all the defects, and elicited all the possibilities, of his pupil's mind. And therefore the ruler, so far as he acts as a ruler, and in accordance with his art, is absolutely unselfish: his one aim is the well-being of the citizens who are committed to his care. It is indeed true that as one in need of subsistence—as a man who pursues the art of earning a livelihood—he may seek his own advantage, and earn a wage by the work of his office; but this he does not do as a ruler, or as practising the art of government, but as an earner of wages, and as practising the art of wage-earning. This is Plato's answer to the first position of Thrasymachus. To the second he answers by an argument designed to prove that the just man is a wiser, a stronger, and a happier man than the unjust. He is wiser, because he follows the old Delphic teaching, and recognises the need of acknowledging a limit. He seeks indeed to compete with others (πλεονεκτεῖν); but he does not, like the unjust man, seek to compete with everybody, or to compete for the mere sake of competition. Competition in itself is not his aim. His aim is absolute excellence (ἀρετή): he only competes with those who fall short of that, and he only competes with them as it were incidentally—not because he loves competition, but because he loves excellence. His aim is to do better than the bad, but not to do better than the good, with whom he is perfectly content to be equal, and whom he is happy enough to be like. But this is the mark of wisdom in all walks of life. The wise doctor or musician is he who does not seek to ensue competition, but rather to ensue excellence; and the just man, who has this mark of wisdom, is necessarily wiser than the unjust, in whom it is absent.[1] Wiser than the unjust man, because he thus acknowledges the principle of limit, the just man is also stronger. Even if a number of men would fain be unjust, to get the strength for an unjust action they

[1] This teaching of Plato—that competition in itself, pursued as an ultimate end, is the mark of ignorance and injustice—is partly the outcome of the old Greek sense of limit enforced by the Delphic oracle, and re-enforced by the Pythagoreans (*supra*, p. 49), but still more the result of the doctrine of justice to which he is feeling his way, and which makes justice consist in the wise discharge of specific function. Men engaged each in the discharge of such a function will not compete with one another, because their functions are not competitive, but complementary. If we translated Plato's teaching into modern economic terms, we should say that economic competition is not in itself good, but only good as a means to the production of economic excellence—that is to say, of the maximum amount of wealth. This being so, the wise producer will not seek to compete with all producers, but only with those who are producing in a poor way; nor will he compete for the sake of competition, but rather for the sake of economic excellence.

must be just; they must stand shoulder to shoulder, and act justly by one another.

Stronger than the unjust man, in the strength of a principle which binds him to his fellows, the just man is also, last of all, the happier man (εὐδαιμονέστερος). The argument by which Plato proves this last attribute of the just man is one of supreme importance. Everything, he argues, has its appointed function (ἔργον), which cannot be discharged, or cannot be discharged equally well, by any other thing (352 E). Here we touch that doctrine of specific function which, as we shall see, is the very hinge of the *Republic* and the fundamental basis of its theory of justice. From the doctrine of function Plato naturally turns to that of virtue or excellence (ἀρετή). The virtue or excellence of anything consists in its adequate discharge of its appointed function. The virtue of the eye is clear vision: the virtue of the ear is good hearing. Now the soul has its appointed function; and the soul has its corresponding virtue or excellence. That function is life (τὸ ζῆν), and that virtue or excellence is good life (τὸ εὖ ζῆν). Nothing can discharge its function if it is deprived of its virtue; and the soul cannot discharge its function if it is destitute of its proper virtue. The soul, therefore, can only discharge its function if it possesses the virtue of good living—the virtue which is also called by the name of justice. But if the soul possesses the virtue of good living, or justice, it also possesses happiness (εὐδαιμονία), which ensues inevitably on good living; and the soul which is more virtuous, or in other words more just, is also the happier soul. And since happiness is more profitable than misery, it follows that justice, as it is a happier, is also a more profitable state than injustice.[1]

In these arguments there are implied deeper conceptions, which Plato ultimately unveils. The theory of justice as the force which gives coherence to any association of men, the theory of a special function appointed for every thing, are theories which are developed to their full consequences in the later books of the *Republic*. But as they stand, these arguments are logical in character. They show us Plato playing with the Sophist at their game of words, and beating them at their own game. They are destructive, and not constructive: they tell us why we should not believe in Thrasymachus' view of justice; they do not tell us in what conception of justice we ought to

[1] The argument, it will be noticed, is partly verbal, and depends on the fact that the Greek words both for "goodness" and for "living well" (ἀρετή and εὖ ζῆν) have a *double entendre* (or at any rate a width of connotation), which the corresponding English words can hardly be said to possess. "Goodness" implies not only moral excellence, but also, as it were, intellectual efficiency: "living well" means not only living nobly, but also living happily. But the argument is also real as well as verbal. Plato means by goodness something which is an intellectual as well as a moral quality; and he means, again, that the exercise and energy of this quality is the highest form of happiness.

believe.) They have hardly done away with the uneasy feeling, that though the brutality of the Sophist may be brushed aside, the fact remains, that justice is something to which human nature does not instinctively take, something as it were unnatural, and only present in man, because it has been put there by convention, and is kept there by force. This is the ordinary feeling of society: this is the tone manifest in public opinion. Accordingly Plato turns to the criticism of such opinion; and, in order to show that justice is grounded in human nature, and is the natural order or adjustment of the human soul, he leaves his logic for psychology, and deserts his analysis of terms for an analysis of human nature.[1]

(3) *The Theory of Glaucon: Pragmatism* (357-367 E)

The new point of view is stated by Glaucon, for the express purpose of being met and countered by the logic of Socrates. Without adopting the position of Thrasymachus, that justice is the will of the strongest when directed towards his own interests, Glaucon contends, in the same spirit as Thrasymachus, that justice is an artificial thing, the product of convention. Stating practically the view advocated by modern writers of the school of the social contract, he argues that in a state of Nature men do and suffer injustice freely and without restraint. This state they find intolerable; and three consequences ensue. In the first place the weaker, finding that they suffer more injustice than they can inflict, make a 'contract' one with another neither to do injustice, nor to suffer it to be done. Secondly, in pursuance of the contract, they lay down a law, the 'conventions' of which are henceforth the standard of action and the code of justice. Finally, and as the result of this contract and these conventions, human nature abandons its real instinct, which is towards self-satisfaction, and consents to be perverted henceforth by the 'force' of the law. Justice is the child of fear: "it is a mean or compromise between the best of all, which is to do injustice and not be punished, and the worst of all, which is to suffer injustice without the power of retaliation" (359 A). Thus while Thrasymachus had grounded justice on the instinct for domination, and defined it as the interest of the stronger, Glaucon would ground it on the instinct of fear, and define it as the necessity of the weaker. He still follows the line of thought followed by Thrasymachus, but he begins as it were at the other end, and adopting as his basis the fears of the weak rather than the appetites of the strong, he arrives at a definition the converse of that of Thrasymachus.

The whole of this theory, which is not only that of Glaucon, but

[1] Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 48. At the same time it should be noted that Plato already implies, what he afterwards seeks to prove, that justice is not a conventional code of conduct, but an inner excellence of the soul.

also that of modern writers such as Hobbes[1]—and indeed it is the *prima facie* theory to which our first instincts naturally spring—has been met by modern thinkers point by point. In the first place, there never *was* any actual or explicit 'contract': there *is* and always will be a condition of things, which is a condition of tacit and implied contract. There is always, on the one hand, a mutual recognition of rights among the members of a community, to which men have tried to give expression, but which they have only succeeded in ossifying, by talk of a 'contract of society' between each and all for the institution of a State in the sense of a political society—as if political society were ever 'instituted'; and there is always, on the other hand, a will of the subject that his sovereign should rule, and a recognition by the sovereign of his dependence on that will, which has been equally stereotyped by similar talk of a 'contract of government' between subject and sovereign for the institution of a State in the sense of a government—as if government were not an essential attribute of political society, which is itself in turn an essential attribute of human nature. Secondly, law as a whole is nothing 'conventional' or artificial, in any sense of those words which is reasonable. If one means by conventional anything created by man, then law is certainly conventional—but so too is everything else, save "rocks and stones and trees". If again one means by conventional the conscious creations of man, and if one opposes such creations to instinctive developments, then many laws will be conventional, and many natural; but there is no great gulf between the two, because man does not consciously create on totally different principles from those along which he instinctively develops.[2] As a matter of fact, law as a rule has first developed, and then been created, if one may speak in a paradox: it has first been a custom, and then a code. At any rate, it is entirely erroneous to oppose the stage of instinctive development to the stage of conscious creation, as if they were contraries: man is a unity, and cannot have acted in two entirely opposite ways. But as it is used in ordinary speech, the term 'conventional' is not applied in either of these senses. When we speak of conventions, we mean neither *any* creation of man, nor any

[1] For Hobbes too believes that the sense of right is a thing not inherent in man, but created by a compact, and enforced by a power. "Before the name of just and unjust can have place, there must be some coercive power" (C. xv.): "for in the differences of private men, to declare what is equity, what is justice, and what is moral virtue, and to make them binding, there is need of the ordinances of sovereign power" (C. XXVI.). The fundamentally wrong thing in his position is (exactly what Plato urges against Glaucon's position) the view of human nature which it implies—the individualistic view that man is a selfish unit, that "in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel, first competition, secondly diffidence, and thirdly glory". On such a view, justice can only be regarded as an artificial thing, doing violence to the instincts of human nature in the interests of a self-preservation which the unchecked indulgence of instinct prevents. Accordingly Hobbes has to be met—as Plato meets Glaucon—by a denial of the view that man is by nature a selfish unit, and by an opposite theory of human nature.

[2] The argument is used by Plato himself in the *Laws* (*cf. infra*, p. 364).

conscious creation of man, but any creation of man which no longer fulfils the purpose for which it was created, but still claims a right of existence; and in this sense law as a whole is certainly not conventional, though individual laws may be.[1] Finally, the basis of respect for law, and of the authority of law, is not 'force,' but will. Laws are valid, because they enshrine the will of the members of a community to do what they feel they ought to do. They are strong, not in proportion to the force ready to execute them, but in proportion to the amount of readiness to obey them. What looks like force (as when we speak of the 'enforcement' of the law by way of punishment upon an individual) is really the assertion of that individual's right will, even against himself, at the expense of his will to do wrong.

But Plato's method of answering Glaucon's position is simpler and more elemental. He realises that in all the views hitherto considered—that of Cephalus and Polemarchus, that of Thrasymachus, and that of Glaucon—there is a common element. They have all treated justice as if it were something external—an accomplishment, an importation, or a convention: they have none of them carried it into the soul, or considered it in the place of its habitation. Accordingly he sets himself to prove that justice does not depend for its origin upon a chance convention, or for its validity upon external force—that, on the contrary, it is from everlasting to everlasting, and is strong with the majesty of itself—by simply showing that it is the right condition of the human soul, demanded by the very nature of man when seen (as he must be seen) in the fulness of his environment. Justice thus becomes something internal. Whereas it had been regarded by Thrasymachus and Glaucon as something outward—a body of material precepts confronting the soul, and claiming to control it in virtue of a power external to it—it is now regarded as an inward grace, and its understanding is shown to involve a study of the inner man. But instead of attempting at once an analysis of the human mind, Plato adopts a method which at first sight seems curious. If we had to read a manuscript, he suggests, of which there were two copies, one in a small minuscule, and the other in uncials, we should certainly attempt to read the copy which was written in uncials. Justice is like such a manuscript: it is one and the same, but it exists in two copies, and one of these is larger than the other. It exists both in the State and in the individual; but it exists on a larger scale and in a more visible fashion in the State. Accordingly Plato proposes to consider justice first as it exists in the State, in its broadest and strongest lines; and not only so, but to consider it as it exists in a nascent State,[2] in its simplest

[1] This view of the relation of natural and conventional is based upon Nettleship (*Lectures*, pp. 54-7).

[2] Similarly Aristotle, in the first book of the *Politics*, proposes to consider a nascent State first, in order to explain the difference between the State and the Household. But, as we shall see, it is a logical, and not an historical growth of the State, which Plato really considers; and the same is true of Aristotle.

and clearest form. And therefore, that justice may be made manifest, he builds an imaginary State from the beginning, and enters definitely upon the ground of political speculation.

The Construction of the Ideal State

Before we examine the "republic" which Plato proceeds to construct, it is all-important that we should be sure of the meaning of the parallel which he suggests between the State and the individual. The use of physical analogies, as we have seen, is characteristic of the *Republic;* but this is no physical analogy. It is not a parallel of the State and the human body, such as Hobbes, for instance, draws in the *Leviathan*, or Spencer in his *Principles of Sociology*. The external and material have been left behind when we reach this part of the *Republic*, and what Plato is concerned to discover is an indwelling spirit of justice. The parallel which is here drawn is thus a spiritual parallel. It is a parallel between the consciousness of man, whether acting as a whole or in its several capacities (of appetite, for instance, and of reason), and the consciousness of a State, as expressed in the whole mind of the community or in that of its separate classes. But the word parallel is misleading, even with the proviso that it is to be understood spiritually. For it implies that the State and the individual are separate things, which can be conceived apart, and compared together. They are not. One cannot draw a distinction between the consciousness of man and the consciousness of the State. The consciousness of the State is just the consciousness of its members when thinking as members. The courage of the State, to take a particular instance of this consciousness, is simply the courage of individuals thinking and acting as members of the State. Each of these individuals may show an individual courage, when he is met by a ruffian in the street: each of them also (along with his fellows) shows the courage which Plato calls the courage of the State, when he faces its enemies in the field. But the courage of the individual and that of the State are both resident in the same consciousness. Why then does Plato first study this consciousness in its social aspect? Simply because, as a consciousness common to a large number of minds, it is a clearer and a larger thing, and because it issues in outward action of a more visibly imposing kind.

In a word, therefore, Plato, attempting an analysis of the human soul, and seeking to discover thereby the essential need of justice for its well-being, sets himself to study the soul as it acts in its social aspect, because he believes that all social phenomena are its products, and because he believes that these products are so recognisable, that they form the best clue for the understanding of the soul from which they spring. "States do not come out of an oak or a rock, but

from the characters of the men that dwell therein;"[1] and this being so, he who wishes to study the characters of men will do well to study their States. For all the institutions of man are merely so many expressions of his mind. His institutions are his ideas. Law is part of his thought: justice is a habit of his mind. These things have outward and visible signs—a written code, a judicial bench; but the inward and spiritual thought which makes them and sustains them is the one reality. It is hard to think oneself away from the visible, and to regard it as the mere vesture of thought: it is easier to see justice in maces and parchments, than to see it as a living thought. Yet that we should thus turn inward—that we should leave the conception of Glaucon, and follow Socrates in seeing justice in the mind of man—is the great step which we have to make. It is the step which Plato and Aristotle both made; and herein lies their contribution to political thought for all time.

In constructing the State from which he proposes to illustrate the nature of the soul, Plato presupposes a certain amount of psychology in advance. He makes to some extent a *petitio principii*.[2] The State being a product of the human soul, its construction proceeds along lines suggested by a conception of the human soul as a threefold thing. For this conception, as indeed for much else in the *Republic*, Plato seems to have been indebted, as we have already seen (*supra*, p. 49), to the Pythagoreans. One of the Pythagorean doctrines was the doctrine of the Three Classes—lovers of Wisdom, lovers of Honour, and lovers of Wealth; and this doctrine possibly implied a correlative doctrine of the Three Parts of the Soul—Reason, Spirit, and Appetite. At any rate this doctrine of the triplicity of the soul, whatever its source, is the foundation of much of the *Republic*. First of all, Plato holds, there is in the soul an irrational or appetitive element of desire (ἐπιθυμία), the ally of pleasure and satisfaction, from which spring love, and hunger, and thirst, and the other appetites (439 D). And then there is an element of reason (λόγος), which has two functions; for by it men both learn to know, and (because they have learned to know) are ready to love. It is an element which will necessarily be of supreme importance in the State; it will be at once a guide of action and a bond of union for its members. Lastly, midway between the two comes an element of spirit (θυμός), an element almost analogous to what we should call the sense of honour, and similarly issuing (for those in whom it is most strongly present) in something of the nature of chivalry. The specific function of this element is that it inspires men for battle;

[1] *Republic* 544 D; *cf.* also 435 E, and Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 56-7:—

ὡς οὐδέν ἐστιν οὔτε πύργος οὔτε ναῦς
ἔρημος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω.

[2] Plato builds a State to illustrate man; but he presupposes a knowledge of man in building it.

but it is not unlike appetite, in that it is also the source of ambition and competition, while, on the other hand, it is also a natural auxiliary of the element of reason, inspiring men as it does to hot indignation against injustice and ready submission to justice. It is indeed as an auxiliary of reason that it presents itself chiefly to Plato: "in the battle of the soul it takes its stand by reason's side" (440 B).

In the light of this threefold division we may expect to find, and we do find, two features in Plato's political construction. The State which he constructs will grow under his hands in three stages: the constructed State will be marked by the presence of three classes or functions. But the growth of the State will not be determined on historical lines: there will be no attempt, such as is made in the *Laws*, to show the natural steps by which the State has developed. On the contrary, Plato proceeds by a psychological method in the *Republic*. He takes each of the three elements of the human mind, beginning with the lowest and proceeding to the highest, and shows how each of these in its turn contributes its quota to the creation of the State. He gives a logical analysis of the different elements of mind, which at any time go to make up that creation of man's mind which we call the State. As he takes each in turn, and in an order which proceeds from the lowest to the highest, there is an appearance of historical method in his construction of the State. But it is only an appearance. He does not mean that the State began as an economic association based upon the division of labour, although he begins with such an association. He does not mean that there was a progress from a 'simple' to a 'luxurious' State, though he proceeds from the one to the other himself. He is aware, all the time, that "the features he ascribes to each are taken from the Athens of his day".[1] The same warning which applies to Plato's sketch of the growth of the State also applies to his sketch of its corruption. That sketch is no historical *résumé* of the constitutional changes of Greece—though it wears that appearance, because, starting from the ideal State which issues from ideal psychological conditions, it proceeds gradually downwards to the worst form of State, which results from the worst psychological conditions. It is an attempt to show that while the presence of the sum of right conditions in the human soul means a true State, each diminution of that sum means *pro tanto* a corruption of the State. It is an attempt again to illustrate from the large letters of the injustice of the State the nature of injustice in the individual, in the same way as the justice of the State has already been made to illustrate that of the individual.

[1] Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 10. The same may be said of Hobbes' apparently historical construction of the State in the *Leviathan*. That too is logical and not historical; and the features presented by Hobbes are those of contemporary England, as they presented themselves to him.

(1) *The Economic Factor in the State*

We have seen that in building the State which is to demonstrate the nature of the soul, Plato already implies in advance a view of the soul's nature. Similarly, when he proceeds to build the State, and occupies himself first of all with the economic structure necessary to its life, he implies in advance the very doctrine of justice which his construction is intended to prove. That doctrine, which involves that each man should "do his own" (τὸ αὑτοῦ πράττειν), and every man should fulfil a single specific function, already appears, in the shape of division of labour, in the first rudiments of the State. Beginning with appetite as the primary basis of the State, Plato shows (369 B-372 D) that it involves some form of association. The desires for food and warmth and shelter cannot be properly satisfied, except by means of common action. The State first finds its binding force in human need. Man cannot dispense with his fellows: each, while able to confer something upon the rest which they need, needs in turn something which they can confer. The result is an inevitable division of labour or specialisation of function, which involves, as its other side, a combination for the reciprocal exchange of the several products. Such specialisation Plato justifies on economic grounds; it means the easier production of a greater number of objects, and those of a better quality. It issues in an association of men united by an economic nexus—an association at first limited to farmer and builder, clothier and cobbler, but subsequently increased, by the addition of a class to make instruments for the first four, a class to tend the cattle they require, a third for purposes of foreign, and a fourth for those of domestic trade,[1] until it reaches the measure of an adult State.

[1] In this connection it is important to notice that Plato is kinder than Aristotle to the middleman who conducts the business of trade. When a currency has been introduced, he argues, and a medium of exchange has made possible a system of exchange through the middleman, instead of barter between the two producing parties, it would be a waste of time for the farmer to come to market and wait about in order to sell his goods; and this service (διακονία) is undertaken by the middleman, who thus supplies a need (χρεία). From this one may argue that the middleman, doing a service which supplies a need, in that it saves the time of the producer, deserves his reward; whereas Aristotle recognises no service, and consequently refuses to see the justice of any reward. On the other hand, if Plato appreciates the nature and the service of exchange in the *Republic*, we have to notice (1) that in the *Laws* he forbids retail trade for the sake of gain, and assigns such trade as he considers permissible to aliens (*infra*, p. 325); and (2) that in the *Republic* itself he adopts a somewhat harsh attitude to production, leaving agriculture to a lower and almost servile class, and speaking of manual arts as "a reproach" (590 C). But it is an error to speak of Plato's aristocratic prejudice against trade and industry (as is done by Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, III. pp. 111-2). He shows himself in the *Laws* prepared to advocate technical education (643 B-C): he finds room for a system of poor relief; and though he seeks to abolish usury, by suggesting that legal protection should be refused to transactions involving credit, he leaves room for a larger development of economic activity than Aristotle seems willing to admit in the first book of the *Politics*. After all, Plato's master was himself a craftsman; and, like him, Plato believed that men might draw useful lessons for the conduct of life from the arts and crafts.

The economic moment is not the least in the life of the State. Every State is, in one aspect of its nature, a great economic concern; and wherever a protective system reigns or has reigned, it has made this aspect prominent, by making the State a self-centred and self-sufficient unit in respect of its economic life.[1] To Plato the State, viewed merely as an economic concern, contains features valuable not only in themselves, and from an economic point of view, but also as types and foreshadowings of political truths. It contains the feature of specialisation; and if the cobbler sticks to his last, and thereby produces better work and more work, why should not the statesman stick to his statesmanship, and produce the same result? It contains again the feature of reciprocity; and if the organisation of economics for the satisfaction of physical wants is based upon this plan, why should not the whole organisation of human life in the State for the satisfaction of every want be based on the same scheme? May not reciprocity here too displace self-seeking, and mutual exchange of services between ruler and ruled supersede the individualism which seeks to do and to get everything for itself? Specialisation is the author of unity everywhere: the doctrine of specific function will eliminate unlimited competition in every sphere. "The intention was, that . . . each individual should always be put to the use for which Nature intended him, one to one work, and then every man would do his own business, and be one and not many; and so the whole city would be one and not many" (423 D).

(2) *The Military Factor in the State*

But whatever the importance of the economic motive—however valuable the lessons which economic organisation has to teach, it is not the only motive or the sole organisation. Plato, indeed, makes Socrates rhapsodise on the golden age which will ensue in the Arcadian State he has built, but at the same time he makes Glaucon scoff at it for "a city of swine"; and Socrates while laughing at Glaucon's wish for a "luxurious" city, and still asseverating that this is the "healthy" and true type, willingly consents to go further (372 E-375 E). One suspects some Socratic 'irony,' some subtle ridicule of the idyllic Nature-state, which the Sophists had painted, and the Cynics delighted to paint.[2] The logic of the *Republic* de-

[1] The tendency to stop short at a view of the State as a great economic concern may also be traced in some forms of socialism.

[2] If this be so (but Campbell and Gomperz both think that it is *not* the case), Plato is opposing the cry for "reversion to nature," which lay behind the theories that the State and justice were conventional. He would keep the State as it stands with all its "luxury," and "purge" it of its mistakes (399 E). At the same time, it must be admitted that there is much reversion in Plato himself—in his theory of art and of medicine, and especially perhaps in his communistic principles (*cf. infra*, p. 229); and in view of this the Arcadian State may be seriously meant. There are similar references to a golden age in the *Politicus* and the *Laws* (*cf. infra*, pp. 273, 308), and here again it is difficult to be sure whether Plato means to approve, or to

mands that Plato should consider two other and higher elements of the human mind, and the part which they play in constituting the State. Accordingly, he proceeds to give its place to the element of "spirit". Men are not content with the supply of the merest "necessaries": they need satisfaction of their desires for refinement. Pictures and poetry, music and dress, are all "needs" of mankind: a large population is necessary to provide them: a larger territory is necessary to support the larger population. War now (373 D) enters as one of the functions of the State, which must acquire and defend a sufficient territory; and thus the element of spirit (which inspires men for battle) next appears, and expresses itself in the organisation of the State by constituting a military force of guardians (374 D). In the logical synthesis of the State from the psychological factors which are its constituents, Plato, having considered the State as an economic community based on appetite, must now regard it as a military organisation based on spirit.

The first, and the vital question, which arises with regard to the military organisation of the State, is naturally the question of specialisation. Shall a professional and trained army be created, or shall the body of the people act as a general militia in time of need? The answer is already given in what has been said of the division of labour in economics. It would be absurd to set one man on making shoes, and shoes only, that they may be well made, and to leave the art of war, a matter of far more vital necessity to the State, in untrained and unpractised hands. If efficiency is to be gained by specialisation anywhere, it must certainly be gained by specialisation in a matter so arduous and important as war.[1] There must be soldiers whose business it is to make war, and nothing else but war; and they must be picked for their work in virtue of a special aptitude —of an abundance, that is to say, of the element of spirit—and trained for their work in a way that will develop that aptitude properly. Accordingly, from this point onwards[2] the *Republic* becomes a treatise on the education of the happy warrior,

> That every man in arms should wish to be.

criticise, the idea of a "State of nature." It should be noted, however, that Plato afterwards speaks of his own ideal State, when fully constructed, as *μία ἡ κατὰ φύσιν οἰκισθεῖσα πόλις*. *It* is natural, and it *only* is natural, because it alone is built on the eternal facts of human nature.

[1] We have already seen that professional soldiers were among the associates of Socrates (*supra*, p. 91), and that, some five years before Plato wrote this passage of the *Republic*, the value of a professional soldiery had been shown by the victory of the peltasts of Iphicrates over a Spartan mora. These facts would reinforce the general principle of Plato—a principle already urged against Thrasymachus in the first book of the *Republic* (*supra*, p. 158)—that excellence demands as its condition the regular discharge of a specific function.

[2] From II. 376 E to III. 412 A.

(3) *The Philosophic Factor in the State*

Postponing, however, for the present Plato's scheme for the education of the ideal soldier, we may conclude the construction of the State from its constituent elements in human nature, by discovering the part which reason plays in its composition. That part is twofold. (1) We have already noticed that spirit, in one of its aspects, is the ally of reason, a hater of injustice and a lover of justice, nor are we surprised, therefore, to find that reason is active already, side by side with spirit, in the construction of the military organisation of the State. The natures which are selected for training as soldiers must not be merely quick and spirited. The soldier is a guardian (φύλαξ) of the State; and like a watch-dog (here Plato uses one of the analogies which are frequent in his method of exposition) the human guardian must be mild and gentle to those who are of the house he guards, though fierce to every stranger. Now the watch-dog is mild and gentle to all whom it *knows*. Those whom it knows it also loves: according to its knowledge, and by the use of the faculty of knowledge (which is reason), it distinguishes between friend and foe (376 A-B). The faculty of reason must therefore be present in the guardian of the State, that he may distinguish between the citizen whom he defends and the enemy whom he attacks. In the soldier reason thus appears as a mere empiric knowledge, which is mixed with a dominant quality of spirit, and expresses itself in an instinctive affection for the object of knowledge because that object is known and familiar. (2) But reason expresses itself most (because it expresses itself in its purity, and not in union with a dominant element of spirit) in the government of a State. It is perfect, not in the guardian, but in the "perfect guardian," or ruler. Here, in the perfect guardian, Plato introduces a third element. The class of guardians bifurcates into two—the military guardians, whose characteristic is spirit, and who are now termed "auxiliaries" (ἐπίκουροι); and the philosophic guardians, whose characteristic is reason, and who are the guardians *par excellence* of the Platonic State (414 B).

But reason, even in its purity, and even in the philosophic guardian, is itself a twofold thing. By it we know, but by it we also love; and there is in it both an intellectual element of apprehension, and an element as it were of affection and attraction. The very watch-dog loves as well as knows, and loves because he knows.[1]

[1] This will explain the bearing of the Socratic principle that virtue is knowledge. It is easy to object, that to know that a thing is right is not to do the thing, and that there is will besides knowledge. But, in the first place, knowledge here means more than the mere knowledge that A is right and B is wrong: it means an understanding of the world in the light of a principle. Secondly, such understanding is conceived as involving an attraction, and as resulting in a will in accordance with itself. The philosophic element which understands is thereby attracted to whatever it understands—truth, or beauty, or virtue. Instead of the "will to believe" of which modern writers have spoken, there is a converse conception of belief as issuing in will: *cf. supra*, p. 91.

Now the quality which Plato originally postulates for the ruler or "perfect guardian" (φύλαξ παντελής)—the element of mind which he originally believes to be expressed in the government of the State —is reason in its aspect of affection (412 D-E). The ruler must be wise; but what impresses Plato most in the earlier part of the *Republic* is that he must be loving (κηδεμὼν τῆς πόλεως). The men who will govern the State best are those who care for it most, and those who care for it most are those who believe[1] that its welfare is their welfare, and its mishap their mishap. If this be the element of mind expressed in the government, the government will obviously be unselfish; and in place of the political selfishness which Thrasymachus had glorified, we shall see realised the conception that government is an art practised for the good of its subjects. In this aspect of its operation, reason is indeed the very bond which unites the State. As a source of affection and attraction it is the factor of the soul which expresses itself in the State by maintaining its unity. Appetite may have drawn men together by an economic nexus: spirit may have added a new military bond: it is reason that holds men together by teaching them to understand, and, through their understanding, to love one another. The ultimate organisation of the State is a rational organisation. Reason in its alliance with spirit has caused the soldier to know, and to like, and therefore to protect, the citizens whom he guards; but reason in its purity causes the ruler to comprehend, and out of his comprehension to love and serve, the State which he governs.

That the rulers, like the soldiers, should be a distinct and specialised class, naturally follows upon this view of the attitude of mind which government expresses. It is not in all that this reason issuing in love is to be found; and those in whom it is most to be found are carefully, and by an elaborate system of moral tests, to be selected from the ranks of the soldiers, and set to govern the State. But this specialisation of a ruling class, which shall give itself to ruling, and to ruling alone, becomes still more justified if we regard reason in its intellectual aspect.[2] The real ruler, as Plato ultimately tells us, must be a philosopher; and the philosophic nature is reserved for a few rare souls: "a whole people cannot be a people of philosophers" (494 A). The ultimate test of the true ruler is therefore an intellectual test of his philosophic power. He must know the "Idea" or

[1] The belief is an ὀρθὴ δόξα, a right opinion, without a scientific basis. It may also be said, therefore, that what Plato originally demands of his rulers is a right opinion; while afterwards he demands scientific knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).

[2] It is not meant that reason exists separately in its aspect of love and its aspect of philosophic insight. On the contrary the one cannot exist without the other. The love for the State, which has just been mentioned, depends on the presence of a certain insight: the insight into ultimate truth, which reason gives, postulates and involves an attraction towards truth. All that is meant is that in one passage the one aspect of reason appears more decidedly, in another the other.

essence of Justice, and of Beauty, and of Temperance, in order that he may fashion into their likeness the characters of those whom he rules.[1] Ultimately, he must know the Idea of which all these Ideas are but phases, and from which alone comes every perfect work—the Idea of the Good. He must know what is the purpose of all doing and of all being—what is the end in the light of which all human action and all existence have a meaning—in order that he may do the work, which is appointed to him in the scheme of things, in such a way as to make it serve the fulfilling of this end. In the ruler, therefore, that final element of mind must express itself, which grapples with the mystery of existence, and arrives at a solution of its meaning. If in him this element is incarnate, then, and then only, has a State come into being, which is the creation (and also the image) of the fulness of man's mind. For if the mind of man is capable of this exaltation of reason, if it can attain to a condition of perfection in which reason guides its operations by the light of a supreme purpose, the State must also be capable of this exaltation, and must equally attain its perfection when, and only when, it is guided by the insight of a philosophic reason. This flows inevitably from the premise on which the *Republic* is based, that the State is the product of man's mind, and that each aspect of the State is the product of an element of mind. The synthesis of the State from each of its spiritual factors cannot therefore but culminate in the conception, that it is not only an economic, nor only a military, but also a rational organisation, and that, as such an organisation, it must ultimately be guided by the highest reason which is possible for man. The "philosopher-king" is not a mere addition or insertion: he is the logical result of the whole method on which the construction of the State has proceeded.[2]

[1] *Republic*, 501 A-C. Plato here conceives the perfect guardians as painting a new picture on a cleaned canvas. In doing so, "they will first look at natural justice, and beauty, and temperance, and again at the human copy . . . and one feature they will erase, and another they will put in, until they have made the manners of men, as far as possible, conformable to the Divine."

[2] There is no need to assume any discrepance between Plato's view of the guardians in Books II and III, and his account of the philosopher-king at the end of Book V and in Books VI and VII. Still less need we assume that the *Republic* falls into separate sections different in thought and distinct in date of composition. It is Plato's art (an art most strikingly shown in Book V) to reveal his mind gradually, and to give his message as it were in successive stages. Already in Book IV (435 C-D) he hints that "the true method is another and a larger one": and in Book VI (503 A), speaking of the position of the rulers, and the need of their training in philosophy, he adds, "This is the sort of thing which was being said, and then the argument turned aside, and veiled her face". But it must be admitted that many scholars have considered that there are separate strata in the *Republic*, and have marked a distinction between the part dealing with philosopher-kings and their education and the rest of the dialogue. Pfleiderer, for instance (in *Sokrates und Platon*), makes a division into *Rep.* A (i.-v. 471 and viii.-ix.); *Rep.* B (v. 471-vii.); and *Rep.* A-B (x.), the transition. Nettleship considers that Books V-VII form a distinct section, possibly inserted, on the ground that they are different in tone from the other books, and that one can easily read on from IV to VIII. Burnet, as we have seen, suggests that Books VI-VII are the programme of the studies to be followed in the Academy, which Plato was about to found,

From this new conception of the ruler, as a philosopher rather than a lover of the State, a new method of selection naturally flows (503 E). Instead of attempting by moral tests to discover those who care most for the State, we must now, by an intellectual test of philosophic power, discover those few who can guide it best in the light of the deepest wisdom. Another result also follows. If philosophy is to direct the State, a new training and a new method of education are necessary. There must be a system of education not only for the auxiliaries, who are to be happy warriors, but also for the "perfect guardians," who are to be philosopher-kings. We may therefore expect, and we shall find, two successive schemes of education in the *Republic*. And just as the philosopher-king is no addition or insertion, but the logical outcome of Plato's principles, so, too, the second or philosophic scheme of education is not an after-thought or postscript, but the logical apex of the argument.

The Classes of the Platonic State

We may now advance the argument a stage further. So far we have seen the three successive logical stages in the genesis of the State —the economic, the military, and the rational or philosophic. We have now to notice that in the completed State there are three classes corresponding to these three stages. Two classes have already emerged, the governmental and the military class, each composed of men possessed of special gifts, who are specially trained to exercise these gifts and to discharge the one function for which they are fitted—and that alone. "Setting aside every other business, the guardians are to dedicate themselves wholly to the maintenance of freedom in the State, making this their craft, and engaging in no work which does not bear on this end" (395 B-C). To these two classes of guardians we have now to add a third class in the State, an economic or producing class, composed of men who have not the special gifts of the ruler or soldier, but who, equally with the ruler and the soldier, confine themselves to a single function, which must necessarily be that of satisfying the physical wants of the community.

and that, unlike the rest of the *Republic*, which is Socratic, they represent Plato's own views. But he does not assign any different date to these books, or suggest that they were not part of Plato's original plan.

It should be added that the assumption on which I have gone, that the *Republic* is a unity and not a compound of different sections, is not free from difficulties. There is, for instance, the difficulty presented by the *Timaeus*, in which the argument of the first four books and part of the fifth is recapitulated, but no reference is made to the end of the fifth book or to Books VI and VII (*cf. infra*, pp. 268-9). There is the difficulty, again, that while Books VI and VII are metaphysical, Books VIII and IX (apart from the discussion of pleasure in the latter book) contain no metaphysical elements and no references to the metaphysical argument of the two preceding books. Nevertheless I cannot but feel that the end of the fifth book and Books VI and VII are essential parts of the plan of the *Republic*. Plato, who had discussed wisdom in the earlier books in its lower aspect of right opinion or instinctive affection, was necessarily bound, and from the first intended, to discuss pure reason, and the part which it should play in the system of his State.

The Platonic State as a whole, therefore, is a community marked by a division of labour between three specialised classes,[1] the rulers (or "perfect guardians"), the soldiers (at first called "guardians," and afterwards "auxiliaries"), and the producing classes (whom Plato calls the "farmers"). There is a *Lehrstand*, a *Wehrstand*, and a *Nährstand*: there are, as in the mediæval conception of "the three estates," *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*. The three several elements of mind which constitute the State are therefore not only to be logically distinguished as factors in its logical genesis (as has hitherto been done); they are actually distinct as classes in its external organisation. This implies that each of the several elements (appetite, spirit, and reason) is particularly and essentially prominent in particular individuals or bodies of individuals. There is one small body in which reason is prominent: another, and larger, which is dominated by spirit: a third, by far the largest, in which appetite is paramount.[2] This is quite another contention from the primary contention that each element of mind is a factor in constituting the full life of the State; and it is a contention which is far more dubious. The State may be and indeed is a product of mind; but it does not follow that the State is or should be divided into classes which correspond to the different elements of mind. In each individual mind all those elements are present; but if in the State each man is limited to an activity which corresponds to one element only, is he not forced to live as a citizen with a single part of his mind? The ruler must live by reason: therefore, Plato argues, he must abandon appetite; and he is accordingly brought under a communistic regime which prevents the play of appetite, and thus involves the paralysis of an integral element in human nature. Again the farmer must live for the satisfaction of appetite; he must be regulated in that life by the external reason of the perfect guardian; and thus he suffers an atrophy of his rational self.[3]

In turning each psychical element into a separate social class, and in confining the right of government to one of these three, Plato is guided by his analysis of human nature. That analysis has two features. It makes a definite separation of the different elements of the mind: it assigns a large predominance in the life of the mind to the element of reason. In separating the elements of mind from one another Plato uses the principle of contradiction. Men are all aware of contradictions or conflicts within their minds; and since the same

[1] *I.e.* it *is* what Aristotle criticises it for not being, a κοινωνία constituted of elements different in kind, each making a different contribution to a common good, and profiting by the contributions of the rest.

[2] Plato seems to be adopting and amplifying the Pythagorean doctrine of the Three Classes—φιλοκερδεῖς, φιλότιμοι and φιλόσοφοι.

[3] The same criticism may indeed be passed on Aristotle's conception of the economic classes as having properly no share in the moral (that is, the rational) life of the State.

thing cannot be affected in contrary ways at the same time (436 B), it follows that the mind is not homogeneous, but the residence of various elements which may, and often do, contradict one another. Appetite, for instance, is a different element from reason: there is a struggle of the two, "which is like the struggle of factions in a State" (440 B). But the mind, heterogeneous as it is, must needs be reduced to unity; and this is the function of reason. The rational principle, with the passionate or spirited principle as its ally, must rule the concupiscent, "which in each of us is the largest part of the soul, and by nature insatiable of gain". Reason is "the little part which rules . . . being supposed to have a knowledge of what is for the interest alike of each of the three parts and of the whole" (441 E-442 C). Reason, therefore, achieves a unity of the mind, in the sense of a system of right relations under which the several elements are not permitted to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of the others. We are here in close touch with Pythagorean principles; and it seems like a definite allusion to Pythagorean doctrine, when Plato speaks of the blending together, into a perfectly adjusted harmony, of the three elements of the mind, "which may be compared to the higher, lower, and middle notes of the scale" (443 D).[1]

It may be urged, in criticism of Plato, that the presence of contradictions or conflicts in the human mind does not impair, though it may disturb, the real unity of each human personality.[2] Such unity is more than a system of right relations between different elements, and more than an hierarchical adjustment of those elements, by which one is made sovereign and the rest are placed in subordination to it. The human mind is not the home of contending elements which have to be reconciled by the victory and through the sovereignty of one of the rivals: it is from the first a unity, and it is pervaded throughout by reason. If, however, we adopt Plato's analysis of the human mind, and apply that analysis to the State, we shall arrive at the conclusions drawn by Plato. To the tripartite soul will correspond a Three-Class polity; to the rule of reason will correspond a system of communism and the rule of philosopher-kings. Government will become a philosophic autocracy, to which the economic and military classes of the State will be subordinate, as appetite and spirit are subordinate to the rational part of the mind. It is true

[1] The musical simile, and the reference to a blending together in a proper harmony, both suggest Pythagorean influence (*cf. supra*, p. 49). See Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 176-8.

[2] It is sometimes said that the Greeks had little sense of the personality of the individual; and one writer speaks of Plato as "like all the Greeks, knowing nothing of the eternal significance of the individual personality". Plato, on the contrary, like all the Greeks, bases this State on the personality of the individual; and though he may be said to have under-estimated its necessary unity, he none the less recognises that unity (*cf. e.g. Rep.* 589 B).

that the unity of such a State will not be a unity achieved by force, any more than the separation of its classes will be a separation artificially made or artificially maintained. Both are for Plato grounded on innate right, because they are both grounded on the innate constitution of human nature. The knowledge which all the citizens possess of their duties and limitations, and the common disposition of all their wills to admit their duties and limitations—both of these, in his view, will sustain the Three-Class system and the rule of Philosopher-Kings. Each class knows what it can do: each knows that it would be unjust if it tried to do other things, or to interfere with the doing of other things. Each class, again, in virtue of self-control, translates its knowledge into a disposition of the will; and by its self-control each class may be said to lend its will and give its consent to the system of classes and the method of government. Nevertheless it is true that the doctrine of the tripartite soul, and the theory of the specific function of each part, tend to produce a polity which can be accused both of excessive separatism and of what Aristotle calls "excessive unification". It can be accused of the one because it rests on a system of classes which has some of the features of a system of castes, and more especially because it postulates a great line of division between the producing and the ruling classes. It can be accused of the other, partly because it involves a system of communism, which unifies the rulers with one another and the rest of the community by pruning away their desires and depriving them of the property which is essential to a full human personality, and partly, again, because it depends on a system of government, which unifies the State in subjection to a single sovereignty rather than in the exercise of a single general will. The fault lies not in Plato's conception of the relation of the State to the human mind, but in his application to the State of a separatist conception of mind and an autocratic conception of reason. If we start from a conception of the fundamental unity of the human personality, and seek to transfer that conception to the State, we shall attain a view of the State as a unity pervaded throughout by reason—as one in virtue of a reason which animates each and every member, and comes to light not in the minds of a chosen few, but in the will of the whole community. We shall conceive the State as a single personality, and we shall ascribe sovereignty, in the manner of Rousseau, to the general will of the whole personality. In a society based on a conception of this character, there will indeed be classes—but each class will be a factor in determining the common will; there will be unity—but a unity consistent with the full individual existence of each member.[1]

[1] It may be said, in the words of my old master, Edward Caird, that Plato "is not organic enough". All the virtues, other than wisdom, are modes of obedience: all the parts of the State, other than the philosopher-kings, are means to an end. *Cf. infra*, p. 236.

But we must not leave the separatism which we have criticised without noticing that it has another side. If Plato will not admit that every class has all the faculties of mind, and that every class should be able to attain the full development of its full faculties, he at any rate admits that it is possible for individual members of one class to possess the faculties peculiar to another, and he is anxious that, where this occurs, such men should readily rise to the class to which their faculties entitle them to belong. He expresses this principle in the form of a myth. All the members of the State are brethren one of another, he tells us, but in fashioning them God wrought gold into the composition of the rulers, silver into that of the soldiers, and iron and brass into that of the farmers and craftsmen. But He did not desire that the descendants of the original members of each class should belong to that same class throughout all generations. He gave the guardians a command that they should guard nothing more strenuously than the principle, that as is each man's composition, so shall his class also be. It may be that a "silver" man is born of "golden" parents; it may be that to "silver" parents is born a "golden" son. Whenever that comes to pass, the rulers must act accordingly; and degrading the "silver" man to the rank of soldier, they must promote the "golden" man to the position of ruler (415 A-C). By this transposition of ranks each man will find his appointed level: if there be the light of reason within him, he will have scope for its exercise. No possibility of human development, Plato would fain believe, is stifled by the division of classes which he proposes: on the contrary an opportunity is given, such as without it there could not be, for the fullest use of every power.

Safeguarded by the transposition of ranks, the division of classes is free to achieve its purpose of introducing specialisation, and making possible the excellence which specialised capacity alone can attain. The setting aside to their work of those who are called to be rulers and soldiers is also the banishing of incompetence from politics; and not the least of the defects which Plato traced in contemporary States disappears with the disappearance of sham statesmanship. Again, the separation of class from class, and especially the separation of the producing from the governing classes (liable as it is to the criticism, which Aristotle passes upon it, that it bisects the State into two halves each with its different temper and its different institutions), may yet be said to make for political unselfishness. On one side stands the economic Society: on the other rises the State—a State carefully detached by a system of communism from economic Society, and likely neither to interfere with it, nor to be influenced by it. The distinction between Society and the State, which the Greeks tended to ignore, may here be said to find a full expression.

Platonic Justice

But above all, in this separation and specialisation lies the clue to that which the whole argument is intended to discover—the nature of justice. In order finally to discover justice, as justice exists in the State, Plato pursues the method of residues. Making what he conceived to be a complete classification of the virtues of the State—justice, wisdom, courage, and temperance or self-control (the four 'cardinal virtues' of the Greeks)—he first assigns to each of the latter three its proper place, and then claims the place that remains for the remaining virtue of justice. Now the virtues of the State, on the principle laid down before, are the virtues of its members when they are acting as members. Wisdom accordingly must be the virtue of the ruling class which directs the State by its reason : courage must be the virtue of the soldiers : and self-control, it might seem, must be that of the producing class. But self-control is more than the virtue of any one class. It is a virtue which is attained, when appetite on its side accepts, and reason on its side provides, due rule and regimen ; and the self-control of the State will accordingly mean, on its passive side the recognition by the producing and military classes of the need of submitting to rule, and on its active side the recognition by the government of the need of providing such rule. As a whole, therefore, self-control is a harmony between the different elements of the State, resulting from the presence of the same conviction in all.

What then is justice, and where is the place of its habitation? It is simply the specialisation of which we have spoken before : it is simply the will to fulfil the duties of one's station (τὸ αὑτοῦ πράττειν), and not to meddle with the duties of another station ; and its habitation is therefore in the mind of every citizen who does his duty in his appointed place. It is the original principle, laid down at the foundation of the State, "that one man should practise one thing only, and that the thing to which his nature was best adapted" (443 A). The ruler, for instance, must be wise, and if he shows wisdom in his work, and cleaves to wisdom as his true vocation, he is thereby just—or rather (for it is the virtue of the State of which we are speaking) the State is just, because its member, in his appointed place, has done his appointed duty.[1] In this sense justice is the condition of every other virtue of the State ; for unless a citizen concentrates on his own sphere of duty, he will not show the virtue which that sphere demands. Social justice thus may be defined as the principle of a society, consisting of different types of men (the producing type, the military type, the ruling type), who have combined

[1] The true ruler will show wisdom, self-control (since that virtue belongs to him in common with his subjects), and, in and through both, justice. Further he must have shown courage (in keeping to his conviction that the welfare of the State is his welfare) in order to become a ruler. Therefore the good ruler, as Aristotle afterwards argued, showing as he does all the four virtues, is the same as the absolutely good man.

under the impulse of their need for one another, and by their combination in one society, and their concentration on their separate functions, have made a whole which is perfect because it is the product and the image of the whole of the human mind. As the principle of such a society, it consists in the full discharge by each of these types of the specific function for which, by its capacities and by the place they have given it in the society, it is naturally meant. The justice of the State is the citizen's sense of the duty of his station, issuing before the world in public action; and England was just at Trafalgar, because her fighting men who obeyed their Admiral's signal fulfilled in the battle their appointed function and showed their specific excellence.

Such a conception of justice is the final and ultimate answer to the individualism in life and in theory which Plato combated. The conception postulates a view of the individual as not an isolated self, but part of an order, intended, not to pursue the pleasures of isolated self, but to fill an appointed place in that order. The individual is not a whole, and cannot be treated as such: the State is a whole, and it must enforce upon the individual the fact that it is, by treating him as a factor and a fraction of itself. The conception of the individual as part of an order, true as it is, is pushed to an extreme by Plato; and in treating of communism we shall see reason to believe that it led Plato to deny to the individual rights, which are the very conditions of his being a moral person and thereby of being capable of any virtue. But the conception of social justice (or righteousness) as the filling by each man of his appointed sphere, in obedience to that categorical imperative of social duty which Goethe, like Plato, proclaimed[1] —this, whatever the defects of its qualities, is the cardinal conception of the *Republic*, and the fundamental basis of that view of public duty, to be discharged in some special station, and of public efficiency, to be attained by some special training, which the *Republic* was written to advocate.

Before we attempt any criticism of Plato's conception of social justice, we have still to consider his definition of justice in the individual. If the justice of the State is the due performance of function by each class, he argues, then the justice of the individual (the discovery of which was the purpose of the whole argument, and the reason for the construction and consideration of the State) will be equally the due performance of function by each part of the individual mind. The parts of the individual mind represent the same principles as the classes of the State. Indeed it is these different parts, predominating as they do in different ways in different individuals, that produce the difference of social classes (435 E). It follows that, as in the State,

[1] Goethe's *Mache ein Organ aus Dir* = Plato's τὸ αὑτοῦ πράττειν. Another saying of Goethe is also apposite: "a man must either be a whole or join a whole".

which is the analogue and the product of man's mind, there are three elements, so in the mind of each man there are, parallel to them and the source of their existence, the three elements of reason, spirit, and appetite.[1] As the justice of the State means that each of its three elements retains its place, so the justice of the individual means that reason, spirit, and appetite all keep their proper bounds.[2] But since the justice of the State is that of the individuals composing it, it follows that each individual has two aspects, and shows justice in either. In one aspect he is a member of a community, and he shows justice by exhibiting the one virtue proper to the peculiar place which the one predominant element of his nature has assigned him—the virtue, for instance, of courage, if spirit is the element predominant in his temper. But in another aspect he is an individual mind, and as such he shows justice if he keeps each of the elements of his mind in its right place, and thereby exhibits the other virtues of wisdom and courage and self-control. If as a citizen, therefore, a man may live with a single part of his mind, as an individual he lives with the whole, finding in justice the keystone of the virtues, which holds them all together in an ordered adjustment and harmony.[3]

The Platonic conception of justice, as applied to the State, may be subjected to criticism. The formula of discharge of function may be held not to touch the essence of what men generally mean by justice. It may be urged that it is too passive in its character; and that, while it bids men keep to their sphere, it does not provide a principle for dealing with the clash of wills, and the conflict between one sphere of right and another, which is what we seek in a conception of justice. We must remember, however, that justice has a companion in self-control, which is also a general virtue of society at large. If justice, which is faithfulness in discharge of function, is deficient without its corollary of a harmony, or fitting together, of the different functions, self-control, in the sense in which it is defined by Plato, supplies that corollary. It has the nature of harmony and symphony (430 E): it extends to the whole of society, running through all the notes of the scale,[4] and producing a harmony of the weaker, the stronger, and the middle class (432 A). Self-control, however, is a moral and not a legal principle; and the objection may be still urged

[1] In the text an explicit account of these three elements in the individual was first given, and it was then shown how they issued in the three elements of the State. But Plato begins with an implied psychology of the individual, constructs a State accordingly, and argues from the State to an explicit psychology of the individual. Though he professes to argue from the uncials of the State to the minuscules of the individual, in reality the minuscules are there from the first: *cf. supra*, p. 163.

[2] Justice in a word is a *τάξις καὶ κόσμος* of the parts of the soul (*cf. supra*, p. 136).

[3] It must be remembered that "the justice of the State" and the "justice of the individual" are both exhibited by individuals. The difference is that the individual exhibits the former as a part of society; he exhibits the latter within his own mind.

[4] The musical simile (*cf.* 443 D) suggests, as was noted above, Pythagorean influence.

that the justice of which Plato speaks is not really justice at all. It is an indwelling spirit; but it does not issue in a concrete *jus*, and still less in any law. Law is one thing, and morality is another: the one is concerned with the external rules which direct men's actions in an ordered community; the other with the ideas which lie behind rules and the ideals which lie behind order. It may be urged that Plato has blurred the distinction, and confused the boundary which lies between moral duty and legal obligation.[1]

In reality, however, such an objection is beside the point. Platonic justice, as we have already seen,[2] is not a legal matter, nor is it concerned with any external scheme of legal rights and duties. It belongs not to the sphere of *Recht* (legality), but to that of *Sittlichkeit* (social morality).[3] It is not a matter of law, or again of individual ethics, nor is it a confusion between the two: it is a conception of social morality and a definition of the code of social ethics which no less than law, and perhaps even more than law, underlies the play of social relations. It deals with the ways in which a whole society may attain goodness and thereby happiness (421 B-C): it is not confined to the goodness or the happiness of individuals. Its formula is that the essence of social morality lies in the fulfilment of "my station and its duties"; and this is a formula which modern thinkers can still employ.[4] Behind this formula, and behind the whole conception of social morality, there lies the conception of society as a moral whole or organism, living a moral life of which every individual is an organ and in which every individual has a function. The political theory of Plato is a theory of this moral organism; and his theory of justice is a theory of the ethical code by which it lives. He does not start from the conception of a legal society based on legal rights, and he does not conceive justice as a system for the maintenance and correlation of such rights. He starts from the conception of an ethical society based on the moral duty of discharge of specific function, and he conceives justice as the spirit by which men are animated in the fulfilment of that duty.

[1] *Cf.* Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, III. p. 75.

[2] *Supra*, p. 153 note 2. At the same time the definition in 433 E (where justice is defined as "*having* and doing what is one's own") seems to imply (in its use of the word "having") that legal notion of justice which Aristotle discusses under the head of "particular justice" (*cf. supra*, p. 47 n. 2).

[3] *Sittlichkeit* is "neither the subjective morality of our inward conscience, nor the external legality of mere law: it blends and transcends both. It is a spirit and habit of life expressed in the social opinion and enforced by the social conscience of a free people. By it our relations to one another are controlled; and since our relations flow from our position or station in the community—or rather, since the sum of the relations in which we stand constitutes our position or station—we may say that it controls our position or station" (*Political Thought from Herbert Spencer to To-day*, pp. 61-2).

[4] It is implied in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, and employed by Bradley in *Ethical Studies* (see the chapter on *My Station and its Duties*) and by Bosanquet in the *Philosophical Theory of the State* (pp. 205 *sqq.*).

Nor was Plato, in conceiving justice in this sense, very far removed from the current ideas of Greece. The Greeks, it has been noticed,[1] had no word corresponding to the Latin *jus*. *Jus* implies not only Right, but also, and still more, Remedy: it is something concrete, "which is recognised, and can be enforced, by a human authority". It is the sum of the actual rules, whether created by usage or by judicial decision or by statute (*lex*), on which the courts proceed. While the Romans thus thought and spoke of a single concrete *jus*, and of *lex* as a part thereof, the Greeks thought and spoke of an abstract and absolute Right (τὸ δίκαιον), by the side of which they set, as the one expression of concrete law, the old and traditional Use (νόμος), whether written or unwritten, of the community. Early in Greek speculation the question naturally arose of the true nature of the Just or Right, with its corresponding quality of Justice or Righteousness, and of the relation between Justice and old traditional Use. It was natural that this speculation should, as it does in Plato, prove more than a legal speculation, and that the Just should be elevated by thought into the ideal good, and Justice into the ideal goodness, of human society. Such a result is the outcome of the fact that the Greek genius was not, like the Roman, specifically legal, or, as such, concerned with legal right backed by legal remedy and enforced by legal process. On the contrary it was specifically metaphysical; and Plato, the greatest exponent of the genius of his people, was a genuine Greek when he sought to find the first principle or Idea of the Just, and even when, strong in his conviction of the truth of that Idea, he sought to revolutionise society in its light. He only departed from the ways of his people in carrying his zeal for the first principle of society to an extreme in which abstract Right proved fatal to any concrete Law, and ideal Justice, resident in the pure reason of the philosopher-king, was made to abolish all law and all legislation. But even for that the way was already prepared, when once the distinction between abstract Right and legal Use had been drawn.[2]

[1] Wilamowitz, *Staat und Gesellschaft der Griechen*, p. 59.

[2] Plato implies, throughout the *Republic*, that ideal Justice is opposed to the traditional usage of the Greek States. Here he is like the Radical Sophists; but while they identified ideal Justice with the 'natural' right of the stronger, he identified it with the supremacy of true or philosophic knowledge.

Chapter IX

THE *REPUBLIC* AND ITS THEORY OF EDUCATION

The Place of Education in Plato's State

TURNING from the justice which is the life-breath of the State to the means by which it is to be realised, we find two great institutions suggested by Plato. One is a system of common education by the State; the other is a social order of communism. A system of common education will give that training for a special work, and that instinct for keeping unselfishly to its performance, which justice demands. By a social order of communism time will be gained for such training (since that order will liberate men from the necessity of acquiring a livelihood); temptations to selfishness will be removed; and above all the view of the individual as part of a whole, which is implied in the Platonic conception of justice, will find its fulfilment. Of the two, the new education is greater than the new social order.[1] It is an attempt to touch the evil at its source, and to reform wrong ways of living by altering the whole outlook on life. It is an attempt to cure a mental malady by mental medicine. In this sense Rousseau was right; and the *Republic* is pre-eminently "the finest treatise on education that ever was written". The new social order is by comparison secondary. It is caution's excess: if spiritual means are not enough, men must draw on material reinforcements. As it is secondary, so also, at any rate in comparison with the positive quality of a system of education, communism is something negative. Education means the bringing of the soul into that environment, which in each stage of its growth is best suited for its development; communism means the abstraction of those elements of environment, which may divert the soul from its proper growth.

The emphasis thus laid on education is the logical result of the Platonic conception of Justice. If Justice is the principle of social

[1] "A really good education will furnish the best safeguard" (416 B). The "one great thing" is education and nurture: if the citizens are well educated they will easily see their way through other matters (423 D-E). At the same time it must be admitted that there is some difference of tone between Book III, where Plato, concerned with education, emphasises its primary importance, and Book V, in which, concerned with institutions such as the community of wives and children, he lays stress on the importance of institutions. Aristotle's criticism (that Plato neglects the educational method of social reform and follows the institutional), unjust as it is on the whole, has some justice with reference to Book V.

ethics which gives coherence to a community, and if it consists in the proper discharge of specific function by every member of the community, the community must, for the sake of its own coherence, imbue its members with its own principle; it must, for the sake of its own excellence, train its members to excellence in the discharge of their function. Not only in the conception of Plato, but also in that of the Greeks at large, education is regarded as a social process, by which the units of a society become instinct with social consciousness and learn to fulfil all social demands. We have already seen [1] that the Greeks believed in the sovereignty of law; that they regarded this sovereign law as the common spiritual substance of a society—the sum of the rules, written or unwritten, which made for social righteousness; and that they held the function of the State to consist in the education of its citizens into harmony with the law. Plato is at one with Aristotle, and both are true to Greek tradition, in upholding the priority and the primacy of the educational function of the State. Education exists for the sake of the initiation of the citizen into the spiritual life of his State; and conversely the government of the State exists for the sake of education. The *Republic*, according to one of its titles a treatise dealing with "the constitution" of the State, is concerned not with questions of political structure, but with questions of educational method; and indeed the only system of government which Plato suggests—the rule of philosopher-kings—is really the issue and consequence of his educational theory. Yet there is also another aspect of Plato's theory of education. Education is indeed a social process, and, as such, it is intended to adjust the individual to his society; but it is also the way to the vision of absolute truth, and that vision is a vision of the individual soul. Apart from society and from social values, education is good in itself and for its own sake: its ultimate goal is rather the contemplation of the reality which lies behind time and existence than a life of action among earth's vain shadows—though we must always, Plato bids us, play our part like men among the shadows, and refuse to forget our duty to our fellows in the ecstacy of contemplation. Here speaks the philosopher of the Academy, seeking through mathematics, and the studies that lie beyond mathematics, to attain to absolute truth; and on this ground Plato joins issue with the Sophists, and Isocrates, and all teachers who regard education as a way of social success. They are doubly wrong. Education, so far as it is social, is the way of social righteousness, and not of social success. And not only is it the way of social righteousness: it is also the way of truth itself.

Greek Methods of Education

We have first to deal with education as a matter of social training. In the emphasis which he laid on social training Plato

[1] Chapter ii. *ad finem.*

was definitely and consciously departing from the practice of Athens, and setting his face towards Sparta, as he may also be said to have done in turning to communism.[1] At Athens education was private; and not before the days of the Roman Empire was there any endowment of schools by the State. A law of Solon obliged parents to provide for the education of their boys in letters (there was no school, and nothing but domestic education, for girls); but the keeping of schools was a private venture, which, if we may trust Demosthenes' philippic against Æschines, was not always made by those who were best qualified. Schools may have been controlled and inspected by officials of the State; but even this is not certain.[2] The course of Athenian education fell into three stages, which we may call primary, secondary, and tertiary. The subjects of primary education (after reading and writing had been mastered) embraced a literary course in the study and interpretation of the best poets, a gymnastic course in various forms of exercise, and a musical course in lyric poetry with an accompaniment of music. The literary course not only taught taste, but—since the poets were the real religious teachers of Greece—it also taught religion, and something of ethics. The whole curriculum (which lasted from the age of six to that of fourteen) would produce a versatile man, who could sing a lyric and accompany himself on the harp, could quote Homer and Hesiod *à propos*, and was physically as well as mentally developed. If still more than this was desired, secondary education might be had, by those who could pay the price, from the teaching of the Sophists, or, in the fourth century, from the school of Isocrates, where something of a definitely political training might be obtained from lectures on rhetoric and politics. Secondary education, which was expensive, and must always have been the prerogative of the rich, lasted from the age of fourteen to about the age of eighteen. The final or tertiary stage was that of military training, which every Athenian youth underwent for the two years between the age of eighteen and that of twenty, before entering on full civic rights. Here for the first time, and then only for a brief space of two years, the Athenian State undertook the work of social training. Apart from this, education at Athens was left to the discretion of the family and the chance of private schools. The family, not the State, was responsible for the training of youth; and the training which the father of a family gave to his sons might be alien to the needs and character of the State, and calculated to produce turbulent revolutionaries in place of good citizens. Such a system, or want of system, offended

[1] On the method of education in ancient Greece see Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*.

[2] The action of the State at Athens, as far as primary education was concerned, was confined to two things—a requirement that every boy should be taught letters, and a moral supervision of schools (perhaps exercised, after the time of Solon, by ten officials, termed Sophronistæ) with the object of preventing the corruption of boys by their "admirers".

Plato's principles. "The education and nurture of Alcibiades, or for that matter of any Athenian, is nobody's concern."[1] The phrase is exaggerated; but it is true that a matter, which in Plato's eyes was of supreme importance to the State, was left to the family. The Athenian State, he believed, shut its eyes to its first task, while it cumbered itself about a mass of legislative detail, which might have been left to individual judgment, if the individual had once been properly trained. And Athens paid the price for her neglect: she paid it in being governed, as she deserved to be governed, by ignorant and inefficient statesmen. Untrained by the State to be a citizen, the Athenian, in his day of office, repaid the State by being an incompetent official. It is easy to deduce the results to which Plato was led by this line of criticism. In reaction against the control of the family over education, he goes to the length of abolishing the family altogether. In reaction against the ignorance which he detected in Athenian statesmen, he is led to inquire what is the best training of youth and manhood which the State, and the State alone, should give; how, by such training, the best statesmen can be elicited; and finally how, through such training and statesmen, the best State itself can be brought into life. Yet Plato's criticism, and the large results which flow from that criticism, must not blind us to the finer sides of Athenian education. Much was learned, and a broad culture was gained, by Athenian citizens, if in haphazard ways. Side by side with Plato's criticism we must set the glowing eulogy of the Funeral Speech of Pericles: "We Athenians are lovers of beauty without extravagance, and of wisdom without unmanliness" After all, if the State did little at Athens, private enterprise did much. Incessant competitions—largely athletic, but also musical and even literary—stimulated excellence; and if there was little training by the State, there was a large and eager versatility of mind.

The type of Spartan education was almost entirely different. While Athens was a modern community, with an advanced and many-sided individual culture, Sparta was still a primitive society, and she still clung, with the instinct of such a society, to the maintenance of type. Moreover she was a war-state, and as such she made large claims on the obedience of her citizens. Early in Spartan history there was developed, and for centuries there was maintained, a rigorous system of State-training (ἀγωγή). The Spartan youth was taken from his parents at the age of seven, and his education was entrusted to an official of the State (the παιδόνομος). At Sparta the family had no control over the education of its members: the State was all in all. Arranged in 'houses,' each under its 'prefect,' the Spartan youth were trained, something after the manner of a primitive public school, in the rigours of athletics

[1] *Alcibiades* I, 122 B.

and in preparation for war. The training was definitely intended to inculcate the 'tone' of military quality on which the life of the Spartan community depended: it was directly calculated to bring every citizen into harmony with the *genius loci* and the social tradition of the community. Such training was the more necessary at Sparta, as there was no written law, and an early saturation in the spirit and principles of the unwritten code was the one way of maintaining the continuity of tradition. The great aim of the training was to temper the mind (or rather, as Plato would say, the element of 'spirit') to a fine edge of courage, through tests and trials which were sometimes almost barbarous, and thus to provide the State, whose object was always success in war, with the tools and the type which it needed. Women as well as men, if in a less degree, were subjected to the rigours of the system: the life of the family was subordinated to its needs, and the home had no place in a State, where husband and wife were forbidden any real marital communion, and children left their parents as soon as infancy was over. Like the family, the Spartan system of property was also adjusted to the needs of military discipline. The citizens were an aristocracy, supported by estates which were tilled by a subject population; and free from economic cares, they were able to give their time to the training imposed by the State. These are all features which recur in the *Republic*, of which, in many respects, Sparta is obviously the model and the inspiration. The Spartan system had indeed a general vogue in Greece. Sparta, *dura virum nutrix*, was a general educational centre, to which children were sent from the rest of Greece to be trained. In Athens herself there was a Laconising party, especially among the upper classes; and a Spartan pose was sedulously cultivated, especially in the relations of elder men with boys.[1] Yet Sparta had her defects—defects more apparent in later days, when Spartan power had collapsed (361 B.C.) than they were when Plato wrote the *Republic*, but already visible, even at the beginning of the fourth century. If in the organisation of an educational system by the State, and in the conception of a principle (and a moral principle) as the necessary basis of that system, Sparta stood for a model, the narrow scope of her principle made for a narrow curriculum, which at the best produced a limited virtue. Developing only the element of spirit, she employed only physical exercises and such music as would stimulate courage, and she altogether neglected the literary side of education. Many were the Spartans who could not read or write, and few indeed were those who knew the literature of Greece. Spartan training did not make a full man: it only developed courage, and even here it did not develop those finer elements of courage which proceed from the understanding. Here Athens had something to give; and it may

[1] It was a feature of the Spartan system, which threw men and boys together, that it encouraged rather than prevented the vice of παιδεραστία (*cf. infra*, p. 298 n. 2).

therefore be said to be Plato's aim to combine the curriculum of Athens with the organisation of Sparta, while informing it with a principle higher and wider than that of Sparta, and continuing it to a later period of life, and into other and nobler studies, than Athens ever contemplated.[1]

From Athens, then, comes the individual aspect of Plato's scheme of education—it must be a development of the whole man: from Sparta its social aspect—it must be controlled by the State with a view to fitting the citizen for his place in the State. It was the Spartan side of his scheme which Plato, as an Athenian, and writing for Athenians, naturally emphasised. If the rule of justice was to be realised, and easy-going individualism and amateur incompetence were to disappear from political life, there must be a scheme of social education to fit the citizen for performing, by the light of knowledge and not by rule of thumb, the duties of his station. But Plato's scheme is none the less meant as a scheme for the education of man; and it never loses its Athenian side. He may think of himself as primarily educating soldiers and governors; but he knows that he is also concerned with the training of the human mind in general. If from one point of view the *Republic* is "a treatise on political and social reform," it is also "the exhibition of an ideal theory of human life, which all may apply to themselves".[2] The theory of education which it contains has its foundation not only in the needs of practical politics, but also in the constitution of the human mind. Accordingly, the old division of the soul into its component elements appears once more, to direct the course of education in stages adapted to the predominance of different elements at different periods of life; and the whole theory of education is dominated by a conception of the attitude of the human soul towards knowledge.

The Philosophical Basis of Plato's Theory of Education

This conception represents the human soul as in no sense a passive subject of educational action. It is not a thing which 'pedagogics' takes, and, after careful inspection of its carrying powers, and the right way to distribute the burden, proceeds to load. There is no talk of the 'steps' by which an object of knowledge is to be 'presented' to the mind. Plato always supposes that the mind is active. Objects are not presented to it: it directs itself to objects. It moves towards every object of its environment because there is in it an attraction towards every object. This active spiritual force the teacher never tries to touch—at any rate directly; he merely

[1] Plato's explicit criticism of Sparta comes in the eighth book of the *Republic* (*infra*, pp. 251-2) and in the *Laws* (*infra*, pp. 298 *sq.*). But the educational system of the third book of the *Republic* is already an implicit criticism of Sparta.

[2] Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 217.

believes that it lives, and trusts that it will act. His concern is with its environment. That environment he seeks to adjust in such a way that the spirit, as it looks around, and moves in response to the attraction which it feels for what it sees, may look around on things beautiful, and move towards the beauty which it sees. Education, in Plato's metaphor, results in the turning of the "inward eye" towards the light; and it does so, because the teacher sets the light to catch the eye. We may speak of the teacher as "bringing out" the best that is in his pupil: more truly, it comes of itself in response to the right objects, and it is in setting them before his pupils that the true art of the teacher lies. In this there may be something of the theory of "reminiscence" (ἀνάμνησις), which is expounded in the *Meno*: the soul has seen in a former life all things which it learns in this, and learning is a 'remembrance' of that life, which flashes to the mind when some facet of an object stirs what we may call an association of ideas. The object only gives a cue: the soul itself responds to its suggestion. But everything depends on the cue. The environment makes the soul, in the sense that the soul determines itself by its environment. He who would make the soul beautiful must set her in a fair pasture, where beauty is whispering:—

And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

This is the reason of that high place which Plato assigns to art, and especially to music, as means of education; and this is why, in treating of the first stage of education, which extends to the end of youth, he emphasises the plasticity of the soul and the effect of beauty on its moulding.

Education is thus concerned with the reaction of the soul on its environment. This reaction is spiritual life, as much as the reaction of the body on its food is physical life. The soul can no more live without food for its activities than can the body; and therefore, so long as the soul lives, there is need of education to supply its nutriment. Education is the matter of a lifetime:[1] a man is being educated so long as he is capable of a response to each new stimulus, so long as he reacts upon and is refashioned by his experience. Education, therefore, is not only occupied with youth: it is also busy with maturity. If at one stage it seeks to tune the feelings and imagination of youth, as one would tune a lyre with many vibrating strings, at another it seeks to guide, by the discipline of science, the reasoning powers which come with older years, and rising further still, to elicit, by the study of philosophy, a comprehension of the

[1] "Instead of regarding with aversion or a bored indifference the subjects which they had studied at school, the Hellenes had an affection for them and continued to practise and improve themselves in them. . . . Elderly men would return to a music-master, to improve their style, or rush off to hear a Sophist lecture on geography or astronomy. . . . Grown citizens retained throughout an affection for education, and went on educating themselves all their lives" (Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, p. 286).

relations between all previous studies, and an insight into the final purpose of human life and the world of human experience. In Plato's State education is far from finished when a young man comes of age. One stage may have ended: there is a further stage to come for all who are fit to climb. Not till the age of thirty-five can the training of the citizen who is fit to bear rule be said to be finished; and long after that age, and after fifteen years of life have been given to the work of government, Plato would have his citizens turn once more, in their declining years, to study philosophy on their own account, and to contemplate, in the fulness of their experience, all time and all existence. In this second and higher stage, which succeeds the stage of youthful education, the metaphor of Plato changes; he writes no longer of suggestion and the plasticity of the soul, but of illumination, the slow turning of the eye to the pure light, and the gradual winning by the soul of wisdom through arduous effort and strict self-discipline.

We have seen that the soul must be regarded as an active force, and as acting in different ways at different stages of its growth. It remains to consider the environment in which it should grow. The general principle which Plato would apply with regard to environment —his theory, as we should say, of the nature of a proper curriculum —may be expressed in the proposition, that mind develops through contact with all the past products of mind. The individual mind grows by assimilating itself to the products which the mind of man has achieved in many generations—his art and his literature, his science and his philosophy. But we have already seen that the State is itself a product of mind; and it is accordingly Plato's belief, that part of education consists in contact with the State, and men must be educated not only in knowledge, but also in civic action. The fulness of an education is in proportion to the fulness of experience which it embraces; and no human mind can be said to have developed to its highest, unless it has developed in every way in which mind has developed in the past. In this past development there is included a political development; and through that development, therefore, each individual man, whose purpose is set towards a full education, must necessarily go. The evolution of the soul of every man must resume in itself the evolution of the soul of mankind. This is the spiritual counterpart of the material truth which biology has taught us, that the physical evolution of each human being, from the first germ to the perfect body, resumes the whole of the physical evolution of humanity. There is accordingly no distinction in Plato between mind practical and mind theoretical, and no confining of education to the latter. Since the whole of mind must be developed, all the practical training and experience which we can acquire is a part of our education. Practice and theory are alike products of mind; and mind must be brought into contact with

both. Thus Plato once more reaffirms the connection of man and the State. The State, we have seen, is a product of man's mind; conversely, we now learn, it is also one of the necessary elements in the development of his mind.

The fulness of human experience is therefore the curriculum and subject-matter of education. But that experience is not meaningless. It is not a chapter of accidents, but a logical sequence, and it must be seen as such. In Plato there is always implicit a teleological conception of the world, based on a teleological conception of mind. In the first place, the human mind, as it issues in action, moves towards a purpose (τέλος), because it acts by virtue of reason, and because rational action is always purposive. To say that an action is rational is to say that it has a purpose: to act irrationally is to act without a purpose. Nor does the human mind merely move towards some purpose or other whenever it issues in action: it always moves towards the same purpose. Mind is a unity in virtue of reason; and because it is a unity, it always moves towards one ultimate purpose—the attainment of the Good—whatever proximate purpose it may seek to realise. In the second place, just as mind on its practical side always acts in virtue of purpose, so mind on its cognitive side, and as issuing in knowledge, always knows in virtue of purpose. It understands objects when, and in proportion as, it sees a purpose in them, and recognises their adaptation to a place in a general scheme. To know a thing is simply to see it as part of a scheme (in Plato's terminology, an Idea), and to understand it as adapted to the fulfilment of that scheme. Now there cannot be a number of uncorrelated schemes—otherwise knowledge would be a sum of fragments, each shrouded round by mystery; and mind therefore demands, as the condition of any true knowledge, the correlation of all schemes in a single scheme (or final "Idea of the Good"), corresponding to its own unity. The unity of the world is thus an ultimate postulate of knowledge, and the unity of the world involves a single purpose which makes it a single scheme. In knowledge as in action, therefore, there is a single ultimate purpose or Good. But this postulate of an ultimate purpose as the condition of knowledge really implies, in the third place, that the world we know is itself a unity, and a unity in virtue of a single sustaining purpose. Otherwise the world as represented in knowledge, the world which is a unity with a purpose, would be a fiction of the human mind. To say that knowledge implies an ultimate purpose is therefore also to say that existence implies an ultimate purpose.

There is thus an ultimate purpose both in the action and the thought of the human mind, and in the existence of the world in which mind acts and which mind knows. Action, knowledge, existence—all imply the Idea of the Good; and right action is action in

the light of the knowledge that the Good is the reason of all existence. Education thus culminates in the knowledge of the Idea of the Good. The soul has only fully adjusted itself to its environment, when it knows the purpose which animates it all. But to know the world in the light of an end is also to act accordingly. Education thus issues in doing as well as in knowing; and to be trained to know the Idea of the Good is also to be given the master-key of action, since all right action is action directed by knowledge of the end which is the end of all things. This is the real and final sense in which virtue is knowledge; and this is the culmination of the philosophy of man which Plato expounds in the *Republic.*[1]

The Training of the Guardians or Auxiliaries

(1) *The Place of Gymnastics in Education*

We have now seen, in outline, the general nature of the subject-matter on which Plato desires the growing mind to be trained. It remains to study in detail the character of the Platonic curriculum, and more especially to distinguish the two main stages into which it is divided. Primarily these different stages depend on differences of age; but we shall also find that they depend on differences of class. The first stage, which belongs to youth, is also the stage through which alone the great majority of the class of soldiers (or auxiliaries) ever pass; and the training peculiar to this stage is thus at once the training of youth and the training of the military class. Such training, in Plato's view, consists in the training of character through the emotions. It is meant to produce that temper of 'spirit' and poise of the feelings which best suit the needs of the community, and most correspond to the station which the young soldier will hold in its scheme. It is thus predominantly a social training: its aim is the preparation of a class of citizens for the right discharge of the military function to which they are called in the State. The second stage, which belongs to maturer years, is also the stage which only those who are fit for membership of the class of 'perfect guardians' can ever fully attain. Its training is a training at once of middle age and of a ruling class. This is the stage in which the understanding is formed through science and philosophy; and it is thus a stage in which the social aspect of education loses some of its prominence. Plato believes, indeed, and believes firmly, that only a training of the understanding through science and philosophy can produce for the State the rulers whom it needs; and from this point of view such a training has its social purpose and value. But it remains true that a more individual tinge begins to appear in this later stage of education.

[1] The Idea of the Good represents the culmination of the change which Socrates had introduced when he substituted, as we have seen, the question "what is it good for?" for the old question "how is it made?" If we follow Burnet, we shall say that the Idea of the Good, like the rest of the tenets of the *Republic*, is Socratic and not Platonic (*cf.* Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 169).

The philosopher, "voyaging through strange seas of thought alone," would sometimes almost appear to be detached from his community; and though he may be recalled to the service of the State, he comes with sad reluctant steps, and eyes ever turning backwards. The education of the understanding, which should produce the perfect guardian or statesman, produces men who would fain cease to be statesmen at all; and though Plato may maintain that those are the best rulers who would prefer not to rule, he hardly escapes some measure of inconsistency. The inconsistency is natural; and it is one which, as we have seen,[1] Plato himself showed in his own life.

The studies which Plato advocates for the first of these two stages are, in large measure, the old Athenian studies reformed. The three subjects of the Athenian primary course—gymnastics, letters, and music—are by Plato made into two, gymnastics and music. The two however, have both a wider significance for Plato than they had in ordinary Athenian life. Gymnastics includes diet and medicine as well as bodily exercise: it means, in a word, the general care of the body. Here Plato was following, and seeking to extend, a current Greek usage. It was customary for the gymnastic instructor in Greece to concern himself with the general bodily condition of his pupils. "He had to know what excercises would suit what constitutions: he is often coupled with the doctor. His object was to prevent, the doctor's to cure, disease."[2] Adopting this custom, Plato in the *Republic* goes to the length of banishing doctors altogether. Offering to heal a morbid condition of body, they only encourage disease; and in a healthy society there can be no place for their skill. While Plato thus uses the term gymnastics in the broad sense of the general science of the body, his conception of music is equally large. It includes a literary course as well as musical study; and indeed, in Plato's use of the term, it is made to include the study of the plastic arts. Music, in a word, is art in general, as applied to education—art as an interpretation of life in any of the three media, speech, or sound, or form. It is the way of the general training of the mind, so far as such training can be achieved through art—that is to say, so far as it can be achieved at all in youth.

We have spoken of gymnastics as the training of the body, and of music as the training of the mind. In reality, however, as Plato soon discovers, "the teachers of both have chiefly in view the improvement of the mind" (410 D). Both modes of training are really intended to serve a moral purpose: both are means to the formation of character. Gymnastic is a training of the body for the sake of the mind. It is meant to elicit the qualities of endurance and courage: it is meant to give the element of 'spirit' its due temper; and these are its primary aims. Alike in its physical and its moral results, it is a

[1] *Supra*, p. 117. [2] Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, p. 126: *cf. supra*, p. 49.

preparation of the soldier for his place in the State ; and it is therefore a way of social training. It may help us to understand this point of view if we remember, first, that gymnastics in Greece was something of the nature of military drill, and therefore a preparation for civic life ; secondly, that it included dancing, and that Greek dances were not only rhythmical evolutions, but often representative of a story, or a mode of feeling, which gave them a definite moral.[1] But no explanation is really necessary. It is one of our own commonplaces that national battles may be won on playing fields (or, as the Greeks would say, in the palaestra) ; and that games have a moral value, in the sense of solidarity they bring, and the qualities of endurance they inspire, is a thing that our own poets also have said.[2]

(2) *The Place of Music in Education*

If gymnastics is a training of the body for the sake of the mind, music is a direct training of the mind, intended to temper and correct the elements of 'spirit,' and to elicit the nascent power of reason. It cannot give scientific knowledge—for that belongs to other instruments of education and to a later stage of growth—but it can give, and it is meant to give, right opinion. It is meant to 'habituate' the young soul, which is still in the stage of feeling, to feel as it should about such problems as it has to solve, and in the strength of a feeling ingrained by habit to do as it ought to do, without knowing the why and wherefore of its action. That is why artistic media are used. The rhythm and diction of poetry, the sounds of musical instruments, the shapes and colours of the plastic arts, appeal to youth in themselves ; and if, when they come to youth with their strong artistic appeal, they also carry with them a moral suggestion (such as poetry and music and statuary may all convey), they will insensibly instil into the young mind, which accepts them for their artistic appeal, a growing love of righteousness.

But if this be so, it is of all things most important that art should always convey a moral suggestion, and never by any chance lend its attraction to anything which youth should not learn to love. It should always bring lessons of courage to the spirit ; it should always carry to the ears of reason whispers of that ultimate Good, which it will one day know in its fulness. This postulate involves, and Plato accordingly attempts, a reform of literature and of music. In reforming literature, he deals both with its content and with its form ; and while in speaking of the content he suggests a religious reformation,

[1] Gymnastics, we must also remember, played a large part in the life of every Greek city, and in the common life of the whole Greek world. Each city had its gymnasia, or athletic grounds (distinct from the palæstræ where the young were trained) ; and in the gymnasia the citizens gathered to take their exercise together. The national athletic festivals (and especially the Olympic games) were one of the great bonds of Greece. Gymnastics was thus closely connected with civic and national life.

[2] Sir Henry Newbolt, for instance, in his *Vitai Lampada.*

in discussing the form he lays down the first principles of literary criticism and the foundations of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Such a religious reformation was necessary, because the poets who formed the staple of a literary education were also, as we have seen, the religious teachers of Greece; and Plato would accordingly re-edit both Homer and the dramatists, wherever, in his view, they have misrepresented the nature of God, in much the same way as a modern reformer might seek to expurgate the note of revenge or of jealousy from the character of Jehovah as represented in the Old Testament. Here he appears to contemplate an extension of the authority of the State to the regulation of belief.[1] The powers of the State have already been made to embrace education: through education they are now made to cover religion. Through education, too, they are further extended to the determination of the literary form which the poets and the authors of the ideal State are to use. As the State must control the pictures of God's nature which the poet draws, because they will affect the character of its citizens, so it must control the forms of poetic expression, because these will equally influence character. This conclusion follows on Plato's principle, that the soul assimilates itself to all things with which it comes into contact. If it comes into contact with a dramatic form of expression it will assimilate itself to the spirit of that form. Throwing itself into different characters, some of them good and some of them bad, it will begin to throw itself into different moods in its own actual life. It will begin to pose, now in this attitude, now in that; and it will thus go exactly contrary to the fundamental principle of the State, that a man should do the one thing, and play the one part, to which he is called. Drama is the literary form of a democracy, where each man in his time plays many parts; but it is a form which can hardly be tolerated in the ideal State.[2] In a State based on the principle of justice the literary form will be that of narrative; and poetry will be cast in the epic mould, in which the narrator preserves a single attitude, or, at the most, from time to time throws himself into a noble character, and allows Achilles or Odysseus, but not Thersites or Paris, to speak for himself.[3]

[1] This extension of the powers of the State is carried to much greater lengths in the *Laws* (*cf. infra*, p. 365 *sq.*).

[2] There seems to have been a good deal of dramatic action in Greek schools when Homer—and still more when the Attic tragedians—were being recited by the boys. Many of the Greek dances were also dramatic, such as those, for instance, which represented the doings and the passions of the god Dionysus. All this may have encouraged a tendency, from which the Greeks found it difficult to escape, towards posing, and have fostered the national vice of insincerity (οὐ γὰρ εἶναι, if we may transpose the words of Aeschylus, ἀλλὰ δοκεῖν θέλει). It may be added that in the *Laws* Plato consents to tolerate the drama, but only under strict supervision (*infra*, p. 370). In the *Republic* the drama seems to be banished; but it may be held that Plato would have tolerated dramatic imitation of noble characters, on the principle that a good man may be dramatised but a bad man must only be "narrated".

[3] Even the epic itself seems in the last book of the *Republic* to meet with condemnation, and poetry at large narrowly escapes from being completely banished from the Platonic State. There is "an ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy" (607 B); and Plato takes up arms for the one against the other. Philosophy, he contends, sees

Like literature, music in the narrower sense of the word[1] must also be submitted to the regimen of the State, if the purity of its moral message is to be preserved. The State must act as a universal critic: it must discern between various instruments, choosing the harp and rejecting the flute; it must limit the musical modes and times to the simpler varieties. Music, indeed, must be regulated with especial care, just because "musical training is a more potent instrument than any other" (401 D), and because the suggestions of music find their way into the soul with a more subtle pervasion than those of the other arts. Above all other arts, it must be brought into conformity with the fundamental social principle —'one man, one function'. An austere simplicity must be its dominant key; nothing must be tolerated which does not express the sovereign image of justice. In music, as in literature, a desire for simplicity, in the sense of conformity to a single principle, results in a spirit of severe asceticism; and Plato seems willing to reject many of the products of man's mind, in order that the residue may be purely conformable to the principle by which the whole should be regulated. He is ready to reform mankind even at the cost of not a little surgery; and this readiness ultimately culminates in a system of communism, in which such products of mind as property and the family are excised in the name of purification. The surgery from which art suffers may well seem strange in an artist like Plato;

truth itself, as it exists in the Idea or pure form: poetry only imitates sensuous things, which are themselves only images and imitations of truth. Again poets have done no public service for the amelioration of human life: Homer himself never instituted a "way of life," such as philosophers from Pythagoras onwards have always sought to establish. Remote from truth, and remote from beneficence, the poets only corrupt men into unreal feelings of pain and pleasure. They make us grieve, or rejoice, at the imaginary fortunes of others, as we should be ashamed to do at a real gain or loss of our own; and what is worse, they make us lose our command over ourselves in real life, since we insensibly glide, by force of imitation, into behaving towards real things as they have taught us to behave towards their fictions. Thus Plato is led, at last, to doubt all poetry except "hymns to the gods and praises of famous men". His criterion is frankly utilitarian: poetry is only good and admissible so far as it is "useful to the State and to human life" (607 D).

We have to remember two things in order to follow this argument. In the first place, Plato is dealing, both here and elsewhere in the *Republic*, not with art in itself, but with the relation of the State to art. It is a mistake therefore to expect from him any general theory of art, such as we find in the *Poetics* of Aristotle. Secondly, in dealing with the relation of the State to art in Book X, he has mainly in view the opinion of those who held that epic poetry was a way of education which would teach men perfect wisdom and enable them to guide a State or marshal an army. Having sought to prove, in Books VI and VII, the need of an education in science and philosophy for those who are to guide the State, he is naturally impelled to seek to disprove, in Book X, the possibility of an education of the statesman through poetry, and to contend that poetry cannot be a substitute for the second or philosophic stage of education. But that does not mean that poetry has not its place in the first or artistic stage of education, as an organ for the habituation of youth. On the contrary, it has a very large place, provided that the poet uses discrimination, and only puts before the plastic soul of youth noble characters for its imitation. There is thus no real inconsistency between Book III and Book X; but there is a change in the point of view.

[1] The same is true of the plastic arts, though little is said of them expressly (*cf.* 401 B).

and the rigorous treatment meted out to the drama by the author of the dialogue cannot but appear inconsistent.

It may readily be urged that a false conception of art, as serving a moral purpose, is the cause of this inconsistency. The free play of the artistic impulse, it may be contended, is everything: art, cabined and confined by the State to a moral purpose, will lose its appeal to the emotions, and failing to touch the hearer or reader as art it will fail to touch him as ethics. There is truth in such a contention; but we should misconceive Plato, if we held that he committed himself to a view of art as 'didactic' when he committed himself to the State-supervision of art. He never conceived of art as only the servant of the State, or as forced to add to its natural content a moral suggestion which was not inherent in its own message. Art is not moral to Plato in the sense that it must try to convey any lesson external to itself. In itself and of itself it conveys a lesson which is the very essence of its substance. Art is a reflection (μίμησις) of life: in it, as in a glass, man sees the world. But life is informed by a principle, and the world is penetrated by a purpose. What is true of the original must be true of the copy, if it is to be a true copy. The substance of any artistic product must be instinct with the Good that pervades the world, if it is to be a product of genuine art, and a real imitation of actual truth. The teleological conception of the world, which is everywhere immanent in Plato's thought, is the ultimate cause of his drastic cautery of art. He believed in the Good so firmly that he would fain have had it exhibited only too clearly. If he subjugates art to the Final Cause, he subjugates it to a noble victor; and the subjugation of art is itself a compliment to the power which art can exercise in the service of the Good.

The Platonic theory of education issues in a view of the State's sphere of action which at first sight may seem paradoxical. In the name of education, Plato not only adds to the State new functions; he subtracts from it, in the same breath, some of its oldest rights. If he sets it to regulate artistic production, he also deprives it of its system of law and its law courts. In the ordinary view the State's sphere of action is largely judicial; and modern theory, alike in Hobbes and in Locke, has represented the very formation of the State as due to the need of instituting, or at any rate of improving, a system of legal justice. But Plato would sweep away the whole apparatus of law-courts and pleaders and pleas, just as he would abolish, and for much the same reason that he would abolish, the surgery and its drugs.[1] The one is a sign of disease of the soul, as the other is a sign of disease of the body; and his State cannot, and will not, have any of its members diseased. It will have prevention

[1] It may be noticed that in the *Laws*, where Plato, departing from the ideal of the *Republic*, admits a legal system, he also admits medicine.

and not cure: it will have healthy minds in healthy bodies, and it will have them by means of a sound education in music and gymnastics. If such an education has been given, there will be no need of lawyers or physicians. Where they abound, they abound only for lack of a proper system of education. A true State will train and diet the bodies of its citizens, but it will not give them medicine; it will give food to their minds by a right system of education, but it will not need to apply the stimulants of legal justice; it will be occupied by problems of physiology, and not by those of pathology. Plato therefore has no laws to propose, and no legal institutions to suggest, for his ideal State. Legislation is to him, as it is to the extreme socialist, merely a palliative, which "will but skin and film the ulcerous place". "About the ordinary dealings between man and man . . . about insult and injury, and the commencement of actions," he will not "condescend to legislate" (425 C-D). While we conceive the State to-day as a law-making body which interprets its laws through the courts and enforces them through an executive, Plato thinks little of laws and but little of law-courts, and he views the State as simply an executive, free, as such, from the trammels of law and the burden of jurisdiction.[1] As the State is simply an executive, so the executive is simply—or, at any rate, primarily—an educational authority. It is its duty to act by way of enforcing the general outlines of education, which the primitive legislator has laid down once and for all. The one problem for the State is to keep those outlines pure; its one task is to allow no revolutions in music and gymnastics. Plato would have recognised a deep truth in the saying, "Let me write the ballads of a country, and I care not who writes the laws";[2] he would indeed have extended its scope, and made it read, "Let me write the right ballads for a country, and no man will need to write its laws". A good education in music and gymnastics carries with it everything else: if it has once put the spirit of law in the heart, there is little need for external law which resides in mere "words and letters". Law is a spirit: the 'lawgiver' is not so much the legislator, as the educator who gives the spirit. And when once that spirit is there, it will solve all things,

[1] To us the State is the guarantor of a legal scheme of rights and duties, securing to individuals the enjoyment of their rights, and exacting from individuals the performance of their duties. In that sense it is an organ of justice: it prevents or punishes the invasion of rights or the omission of duties. To Plato the State is the upholder of a scheme of social ethics based upon the discharge of specific function by every member of the society; and its function consists in the training of every member for the due discharge of his function. Since justice, as conceived by Plato, consists in such due discharge of function, the State is to him, in his own sense of the word, an organ of justice. But his State is so full of justice in this latter sense that it has no justice at all in the ordinary sense of the word. Where specific function is duly discharged, as Plato believes that it will be when men are once properly trained, there is no room for the justice which prevents or punishes breaches of right or derelictions of duty. The reign of a positive social Righteousness replaces the reign of a negative legal Right.

[2] *Cf. Rep.*, 424 C.

and bring all things to remembrance (423 E). Hence springs Plato's aversion to written law; and hence comes the fundamental lesson which he has to teach, that the State is a spirit, and by the spirit it shall live. The lesson is permanently true; but the aversion to law is the pushing of a true principle to an extreme application which is untrue. The spiritual basis of law can never do away with the need of its external expression; and law will sink into subjective caprice, if it does not receive an objective form.[1]

The Higher Studies of the Perfect Guardians

So far of the stage of education which belongs to youth, and through which the soldier is trained. It remains to consider the education of maturer years, which makes the perfect guardian. Here we ascend from an education through art to an education through science. We leave the reform of the ordinary curriculum of the Athenian primary school, and we turn to a scheme of higher education in mathematics and metaphysics. The scheme was not without precedent in the educational life of Athens. Protagoras and other Sophists had offered to young men fresh from the primary school a number of courses of higher instruction in rhetoric and politics, and even in mathematics and logic. Isocrates, from the beginning of the fourth century, was training young men, between the age of fourteen and that of eighteen, in a course of rhetoric, politics, and the humanities, by way of preparation for a political career. What Plato propounded in the *Republic* was thus a reformed and rival scheme of higher education. Nor did he merely propound a scheme on paper. He carried his scheme into working in the Academy.[2] The programme of mathematical and metaphysical studies in the *Republic* is the programme of the Platonic school which was about to be opened in the Academy, and it is the programme which was actually followed there. It is the programme, we may also add, of the first and earliest University[3]—the first corporate institution, in which knowledge was sought for the sake of knowledge.

We need not imagine that there is any serious cleavage between Plato's account of the first, or artistic, stage of education, and the

[1] This has been the danger which has at all times attended the assertion of the spiritual and subjective basis in the sphere of religion. The reaction against the hard letter of the law provoked in the early Church an antinomianism which covered itself with the plea of the spirit; and when the German Reformation asserted justification by faith, there came with the assertion something of a contempt for the external manifestation of faith in works, which issued in a similar extravagance.

[2] The *Republic* may have been finished by 387 B.C. The Academy was opened in 386.

[3] The Platonic school in the Academy had something of a matriculation or entrance examination—*μηδεὶς ἀγεωμετρητὸς εἰσίτω*. The inner circle of its members dined together, like the members of an Oxford or Cambridge College. It is interesting to notice that, true to his principles, Plato admitted women as well as men to its membership (Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, pp. 196-7).

account which he gives of the later or scientific stage. It is true, as we have seen, that there is a certain difference of atmosphere in the two accounts. In the one education is more of a social training: in the other it is more of an individual development. But this, after all, is in the nature of the case; for the earlier training belongs to the general body of guardians, who need some schooling in the paths of civic duty, and the later belongs to the few rare souls who are fit to guide their fellows. It is true, again, that the two accounts are separated by a large intervening tract of other matters. But it is also true that Plato joins the two accounts together by a nice dovetailing.[1] He hints, in finishing his account of the first stage of education, that it is imperfect (416 B): he is careful, in beginning his account of the second stage, to connect it closely with, and to make it spring naturally from, the earlier stage (521 D-E). Even during the earlier stage of education he would already have had youth trained in the elements of science. Arithmetic, geometry, and the general rudiments of science should be presented to the mind in childhood, not by the use of compulsion, but as a sort of amusement; for you will then, Plato thinks, be better able to find out the natural bent, and to discover those who are fit to be chosen for further and sterner study.[2] Apart, however, from any such external adjustment of the two stages, there is another and deeper connection of an inward and spiritual order. Art, we have seen, is the reflection of the purpose of the world to the eyes of faith; and it naturally prepares the way for science to suggest, and for metaphysics (or dialectic) ultimately to reveal, the purpose itself to the pure intelligence. From the first it was the aim of education to turn the eye towards that Idea of the Good, which it is the ultimate purpose of education to teach men to see in its fulness. In the first stage the soul insensibly grew into harmony and sympathy with the Idea, when embodied under the form of Beauty in art and literature: in the last, uplifted by science and philosophy, the soul recognises face to face the friend whose image it has so often seen, and with whose being it has itself become instinct. Not only because it has been trained in the elements of science, but also because it is unconsciously instinct with the Idea of the Good, youth is ready at the age of twenty to begin that life-long education, which lifts it by successive stages to the 'contemplation' of the pure idea.

The curriculum of the mediæval university embraced two main divisions—the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*. The former included

[1] We may add that it is part of Plato's dramatic art to postpone an argument until the reader has been put in a right frame of mind for its reception. His argument, to use a metaphor of his own, gradually unveils itself. From his point of view it was necessary that he should have enunciated the principle of the rule of philosopher-kings, as he does at the end of Book V, before he could proceed to sketch the lines on which they should be educated, as he does in the later books.

[2] Arithmetic, with a knowledge of weights and measures, and of the calendar, was taught along with letters in the primary schools of Athens.

the subjects of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic (which included logic and metaphysics): the latter the subjects of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

> Gram. loquitur, Dia. vera docet, Rhet. verba colorat,
> Mus. canit, Ar. numerat, Geo. ponderat, As. colit astra.

Plato, who founded the University, was also the founder of this curriculum.[1] The *Quadrivium* and dialectic are the subjects of higher study propounded in the *Republic* and pursued in the Academy. There are, however, certain differences between the mediæval course and the Platonic; and it may help to elucidate the peculiar nature of Plato's curriculum if we notice these differences. In the first place, Plato has no room for grammar, and still less for rhetoric, which, as we have seen, he condemns so vigorously in the *Gorgias*. Rhetoric was the staple of instruction in the school of Isocrates; and Plato had a conception of the nature of education very different from that which Isocrates advocated and practised.[2] It is another difference between Plato and the Middle Ages, that while the mediæval student studied together, and at the same time, the subjects of the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*, Plato carefully distinguishes his *Quadrivium* from dialectic, and postpones the study of dialectic until the studies of the *Quadrivium* are completed. Finally, the mathematical studies advocated by Plato were much more serious, and far more vital, than the *Quadrivium* of a mediæval university. This is a point of cardinal importance. Of all the products of the Greek genius the most peculiar, and in many respects the most wonderful, was the science of mathematics. The glory of Greek literature, and even of Greek philosophy, must not blind us to the wonders of Greek mathematics. From Thales, to whom, at the beginning of the sixth century, is ascribed the discovery of the first theorem in geometry, down to Hipparchus, who, in the second century, invented trigonometry, the progress is continuous.[3] That progress was rapid in Plato's own day. Solid geometry was just being added to the realm of knowledge. It is little wonder, in the light of these facts, that Plato should have emphasised the sovereign importance of mathematics for all higher

[1] Strictly speaking, the Pythagoreans were the inventors of the *Quadrivium* (see Adam's edition of the *Republic*, II. p. 164); and there seems evidence for thinking that "in some form or another" their course "was becoming recognised in the early part of the fourth century B.C., and even earlier" (*ibid.*).

[2] As far as grammar and rhetoric have any place in the scheme of the *Republic*, they belong to the earlier stages of education, and to the study of letters, which would naturally include the study of a certain amount of grammar and of Greek authors in prose and verse—just as the 'rhetoric' of the Middle Ages meant the study of Cicero and Vergil, and therefore differed (we may add) from the 'rhetoric' of Isocrates.

[3] See Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 5-11, and Marvin, *The Living Past*, c. iv. Marvin suggests "from Thales to Hipparchus" as the formula of Greek development, just as "from the Twelve Tables to the Code of Justinian" is the formula of Roman progress.

study. Moreover Plato was under Pythagorean influence;[1] and the Pythagoreans, of all Greek thinkers, laid the greatest emphasis on mathematical studies as the key for the unlocking of the closed doors of 'reality'. Like them, Plato firmly believed that mathematics was the true and proper propædeutic to philosophy. While Aristotle came to philosophy through the study of animal and human development—through biology and the kindred study of history—Plato, as we have already noticed, made a knowledge of geometry the condition of entrance upon philosophical studies. While the affinities of Aristotle, in many respects, and in spite of great differences, are with Huxley and the biological school of the nineteenth century, the affinities of Plato are with Descartes and the mathematico-physical school of the seventeenth century.[2]

Plato's belief in the efficacy of mathematical studies is connected with his general philosophy. Truth, he conceived, does not reside in sensible particulars. These are only a shadow or image cast by the Idea—the Universal—in which they "partake," and by their participation in which they possess such truth as is in them. That which is, as distinct from that which appears to be, is the world not of sense-perception, but of thought. Reality cannot be seen: it has to be thought. "Man" is not the men we see walking, or any amalgam of such sense-perceptions: he is something we can only know by thought. It is the condition therefore of knowledge, or the attainment of reality, that we should transcend sense-perception and rise above sensible particulars. Now the value of mathematics lies in the fact that it is, as it were, the natural ladder towards such an ascent. The "things" with which it deals are not sensible particulars, though on the other hand they are not Ideas. They are steps from the one to the other. The units of arithmetic, for instance, are not concrete counters presented by the senses; they are abstractions of the intelligence. That is why arithmetic, "necessitating as it does the use of the pure intelligence in the attainment of pure truth" (526 B), has a philosophical value. On the other hand arithmetic has also an obvious practical value: "The man of war must learn the use of number, or he will not know how to array his troops" (525 B). Just because it has this double value—because it can satisfy ordinary needs as well as prepare the way for philosophy—arithmetic is obviously designed to be the first step in any system of higher education. It must be studied by those who are going to be the principal men of

[1] The first stage of Platonic education, in which music and gymnastic are closely linked, is already reminiscent of the teaching of Pythagoras, and especially of his doctrine of the purgation of the soul by music, and of the body by medicine (*cf. supra*, p. 49).

[2] The nature of the true propædeutic for philosophy is still a question among philosophers. In Oxford philosophy starts from the classics, and from the *Republic* and the *Ethics*. But there has been a movement, of late years, for a school of modern philosophy, which should start from, or at any rate be closely connected with, the study of natural science. Such a school might be more after the heart of Plato than a school which starts from the *Republic* itself.

the State (525 C): it must be used as the training of the best natures (526 C). From arithmetic it is easy to rise to geometry. Geometry also has a practical value: it makes a difference, in the choice of positions and the methods of tactics, whether "a general is or is not a geometrician" (526 D). A little knowledge, however, will be enough for such practical purposes; and the real value of geometry depends on the extent to which "it makes more easy the vision of the Idea of the Good" (526 E). Hence Plato adds solid to plane geometry, and therein adds a new study to Greek mathematics. To astronomy and to harmonics (the science, as distinct from the practice, of music) he assigns the same value which he attributes to arithmetic and to geometry. Here, however, even more depends on the sciences being studied abstractly, and with a view to the future study of philosophy. Astronomy must not be merely the observation of the heavenly bodies with the eyes, or harmonics an attempt to discriminate notes by the ear; in both, just as in geometry, we must "employ problems"—we must rise above sense-perceptions, reflecting on the reasons, and seeking to know the why and the wherefore, of the motions which glide through the heavens, or quiver along the notes of the lyre (530 B: 531 C).

These studies, in Plato's view, should occupy a period of no less than ten years. They should begin at the age of twenty, when the earlier stage of education, and the two years of military training by which it is followed, are both over: they should last till the age of thirty. Not all who went through the earlier stage will be admitted to these later studies. They are reserved for those who showed most promise in the earlier stage, and, in particular, most aptitude for science: they are the privilege of the best natures, and the training-ground of the chosen few who are likely to become perfect guardians and rulers of the State.[1] The ten years during which they study the *Quadrivium* will not be devoted to the isolated pursuit of each of its several subjects: they will be used, towards the end, for the bringing together, into relation with one another, of the subjects learned without order in earlier days (537 B); and the aim of the study of mathematics will thus be the discovery of the common principles by which all the subjects of such study are united. Studied in this way, and with this aim, these subjects are a natural preparation for the further study of dialectic, which will occupy the five years between the age of thirty and that of thirty-five. Dialectic stands above mathematics, as mathematics stands above the subjects of the first stage of education. If mathematics is a ladder from the objects of sense to the objects of thought, dialectic is the instrument by which we attain to knowledge of the objects of thought them-

[1] The education of the rest is completed, and they remain in the ranks of the army. To those ranks will also be assigned those students of mathematics who fail to sustain their promise, and all again who, in the stage of dialectic, or even in later stages, break down under tests and trials.

selves—the pure Ideas—and ultimately to knowledge of the one final object of thought—the Idea of the Good. We may call dialectic by the name of logic and metaphysics, or by the simple name of philosophy; but by whatever name it goes it means, in a word, the study not merely of subjects of mental discipline (or μαθήματα), but of the first principles of Being itself and that first and last principle, the Idea of the Good, which is the cause of Being and the goal of knowledge. The dialectician is he who attains to a conception of the essence of each thing, and comprehends the Idea of the Good (534 B). It follows that the comprehensive mind is always the dialectical (537 C); and therefore Plato would select those students of mathematics who have most shown such comprehension, and have seen most clearly the natural relations of their subjects of study to one another and to true being, and he would set them, for a period of five years, to the study of dialectic. In that study they will be proved and tried; and by such proofs and trials those who lack the philosophic nature will be eliminated. Those who remain are the philosopher-kings and perfect guardians of the State. For fifteen years, from the age of thirty-five to that of fifty, they are to give themselves to the service of the State, commanding in war, holding such offices as are not reserved for age, and gaining experience of life (539 E). All the time of their service they will be tested and tried; and at last, at the age of fifty, those who have come through every test and trial with credit and distinction[1] may be allowed to reach the goal, not of rest, but of perfect activity (540 A-B). They may spend part of their time in pure philosophy, and in contemplation of the Good: they must still spend part of their time, when their turn comes round, in the service of the State. They must labour and travail for their fellows, perfectly, in the light of a perfect knowledge, not as something noble, but as something necessary, not for themselves, but for posterity, since the purpose of their travail is this, that they should leave the State as they found it, and train the next generation to carry forward their work in the same faith to the same end.

[1] It should be noted that the principle of "distributive justice" implied by Plato—the canon by which office is to be awarded—is here that of ability, as tested and tried by "examination," ability of a moral as well as of an intellectual order. In the earlier books of the *Republic* it was less ability than patriotism: the proper ruler was he who identified his interests with those of the State. Two principles are thus implied—reward according to capacity to do the State's work, and reward according to the measure of devotion to the State. The two are not discrepant: the principle of patriotism prepares the way for that of ability, and the man who shows devotion does so because he has the wisdom to know (if only by the light of mere "opinion"), and the courage to act on his knowledge, that the State is indissolubly one with himself, since he is himself an "organ" of the State. Patriotism prepares the way for knowledge, as the moral prepares the way for the philosophic education. The system of examination (δοκιμασία) is interesting: it is the sanction of the whole system of education, designed to make sure of what the system is intended to produce—that the ruler shall know what he works at and love what he knows. A system of regular training for political duties, enforced by "examination," was thus Plato's cure for contemporary amateurism in politics.

The Life of Contemplation and the Life of Action

In Plato's educational theory, as in his own life, there is a certain wavering between the ideal of action and that of contemplation. Sometimes the goal of life seems to be the vision of the Idea of the Good: sometimes it seems to be the betterment of humanity, and the turning away from the vision to a life of social service. Sometimes education seems to mean a process of social adaptation, by which men are fitted for the place they can best fill in their community: sometimes it seems to mean a perfect self-development. We may trace in Plato's picture of the life of the philosopher in actual communities something of that phase of disillusionment with action, and that despair of politics, which he portrays in the Seventh *Epistle*. The philosopher has tasted the sweetness of philosophy: he knows the madness of the multitude, and that no politician is honest, and he becomes "like one who, in the storm of dust and sleet, which the driving wind hurries along, retires under the shelter of a wall" (496 C-E). Yet Plato acknowledges—and his own life was in the future to show the sincerity of that acknowledgment—that such abstention is only a 'second best'. The philosopher will only do his greatest work in the State; "for in a State which is suitable to him, he will have a larger growth, and be the saviour of his own country as well as of himself". The State of the *Republic* is such a State, and therefore its citizens belong to its service: "the legislator formed them, not to please themselves, but to be his instruments in binding up the State" (520 A). The State has been a necessary condition of the growth of the philosophic nature; and the philosopher is in turn necessary to the State, because he is "a living authority . . . having the same idea of the community as that which guided the legislator" (497 C-D), and because, as a living authority, he can save the State from the cramping prescriptions of law. In the *Republic*, therefore, the philosopher is compelled to "descend in his turn" into the den of affairs: he cannot be allowed to do what he is allowed, and indeed encouraged, to do in ordinary States—to stay in the upper world of vision and contemplation (519 D). In this way the philosophic stage of education, like the earlier stage, is made to appear a mode of social adaptation, by which men are fitted for their place in a community and trained to be its guides. As soon as he has found the truth, the philosopher is bound to communicate it, as a 'way of life,' to a society; and the instant that he has attained to contemplation, he is bound to turn to action. Yet the terms in which Plato speaks—terms of descent from the higher to the lower: terms of compulsion and bounden duty—suggest tnat he feels that there is, after all, a contradiction. He may seek to solve the contradiction by the argument that the philosopher owes gratitude for his training, and that his gratitude must take the form of action in the affairs of his community; but the argument only holds good in a community which gives a philosophic training to its best members, and even so it makes the life of action a life of distraction, which gratitude may nerve men to

endure, but by which they are none the less debarred from the best and fullest use of their powers. The truth is, that Plato, "though he had learned the duty of philosophers to descend in turn into the cave, still felt that the life [of contemplation] was in truth the highest".[1] Hence he could sometimes think of the vision of the Idea of the Good as necessarily leading to a life of practical action; and sometimes he could think of the vision as sufficient in itself. Sometimes, again, he could think of knowledge as precious for its own sake; and sometimes he could think of it as precious for the results which it would produce on the life of a community. The problem is one which must always confront the thinker. He may take comfort, if he can, in the reflection that the pursuit of truth is in itself a mode of social service; that to communicate, if only by teaching and writing, the truth we have seen is to fulfil the duty of our station; that the ideals we have discerned will permeate the world of action, and influence men of affairs.[2] Plato was not content with that comfort; and throwing aside Fabian tactics of permeation, he sought to be, and he held that every thinker should seek to be, a man of action. This was not ambition: it was the renunciation of ambition. There is something of asceticism in Plato's picture of the philosopher turning from the vision to mix in secular affairs. It is as if a monk were abstracted from the cell of his contemplation to sit on the papal chair, protesting and yet also—because that was the harder way—consenting.

The Government of the Ideal State

In any case the government of the ideal State which Plato has created must rest with philosophers; and we have, in conclusion, to consider the nature of their rule. It may seem paradoxical thus to speak of government at the end, and as the corollary, of the description of a system of education; but the paradox is inherent in Plato. Instead of conceiving education as a consequence of the existence of government, and as one of the functions of government, he conceives government as the consequence of education; and he finds his rulers in the course, and as the result, of the creation of an educational system. The reason is simple. The State is itself an educational system; and its government is the result of its nature. Because it is such a system, it must be guided by knowledge; and because the only true knowledge is philosophy, it must be guided by philosophers. "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, cities will never have rest from their evils" (473 C-D). Only in this way

[1] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 245, commenting on the passage in the *Theætetus* (173 C *sqq.*) on the philosophic life.

[2] In other words, we may deny the antithesis implicit in Plato's thought. We may say that we cannot draw a distinction between action and contemplation—at any rate on the ground that the one has a social quality which does not belong to the other. Both may be social—just as both may be non-social. Plato, at any rate, has influenced the world of action in infinite ways by his contemplation.

can an end be made of the incompetence and the factions of ignorant and self-seeking politicians : only in this way can the State gain, what of all things it may well pray most to have, rulers who rule in wisdom, because their eyes have seen the truth, and again in unselfishness, because they think of their office not as a perquisite, but as a duty and a burden to be borne for the good of their fellows.

The rôle of philosopher-kings is termed by Plato either monarchy or aristocracy : the two names only describe one form (445 D), since "we count royal and aristocratical as one" (587 D). By whatever name they go, the philosophic rulers are absolute—absolute in the sense that they are untrammeled by any written law. Here Plato, as we have seen, leaves behind the ordinary Greek conception of the State as an association of equals, owning only the sovereignty of law ; and he comes near to the adoption of tyranny, the form of rule in which the sovereignty of law disappeared, and a personal rule usurped its place. Of all forms of government this was the most unpopular in the Greek world : and Plato, though he is careful to dissociate his 'new monarchy' from ordinary tyranny, which he regards as its last and worst degradation, is nevertheless aware that he is enunciating a dangerous doctrine. That is why he propounds the rule of the philosopher-king as the greatest of the paradoxes of the *Republic*—greater than the paradox of the common education and function of men and women, and greater even than the paradox of community of wives. But the rule of the philosopher-king, though it may superficially seem to approach tyranny, and though it may sometimes be inaugurated, as Plato sought to inaugurate it at Syracuse, by the reform of tyranny, is no unqualified absolutism. It may be free from written law : it is not free from the restraint of what we may call the fundamental articles of the constitution. The philosopher is not to move and change the State at will : he is to preserve it at rest, as a static body, in loyal adherence to its basic principles. Of such principles Plato enumerates four. The rulers will have to watch against the entry either of poverty or of wealth into the State (421 E). They will have to limit the State to the size consistent with unity, remembering that it must be accounted neither large nor small, but one and self-sufficient (423 C-D).[1] They must maintain the rule of justice, and ensure that every citizen is occupied, and only occupied, in the discharge of his specific function (423 D). Finally, and above all, they must ensure that no innovation shall ever be made in the system of education ; for "whenever modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them" (424 B-C). Thus, does Plato, true after all to the ideas of Greece, seek to make even his philosopher-kings the servants of a fundamental and unchanging social order.

[1] It throws a flood of light on the character of the Platonic State when we notice its size. A thousand warriors, Plato says, will suffice (423 A). A larger number of members of the third estate must also, of course, be included to make up the full population.

Chapter X

THE *REPUBLIC* AND ITS THEORY OF COMMUNISM

Community of Property

PLATO not only invents a new system of education, in virtue of which the State is reformed, and its government recast, in the name of justice and for the sake of spiritual betterment: he also invents a new social order, under which the governing class surrenders both family and private property, and embraces a system of communism. This too, as we shall see, is done in the name of justice; and here again spiritual betterment is the ultimate aim. Because Plato was Plato, the reform of education, and thereby of government, was the centre and basis of his thought; and the new social order was only an outwork or bastion. But because his critics and commentators have been repelled or attracted by the novelty of that order, and because, in more modern times, it has been natural to emphasise the affinities between Plato's communism and the tenets of socialism, attention has principally fastened on what Plato himself would have regarded as a subsidiary part of his scheme. Aristotle gave the cue, when, in the second book of the *Politics*, he directed his criticism entirely against the new social order, and when, in the course of that criticism, he urged that the way of reform lay rather in education than in sweeping material changes, thus accusing Plato, by implication, of having inverted the proper order of progress. If, however, we turn to Plato's own exposition, and seek to apprehend the balance of his own convictions, we cannot for an instant doubt that communism is only a material and economic corollary of the spiritual reformation which, first and foremost, he sought to achieve. A really good education, he holds, furnishes the best safeguard of the State's unity (416 B); "if our citizens are well educated . . . they will easily see their way through . . . other matters, such, for example, as marriage, the possession of women, and the procreation of children". In spite of Aristotle's criticism, it cannot be doubted that it was primarily by spiritual means that Plato sought to regenerate man and society.[1] The material institutions of a communistic system are consequential: they are simply meant to clear the ground, and to remove the hindrances in the way of the operation of those spiritual means. This is implied in the fundamental conceptions of the *Republic*.

[1] See, however, the note on p. 181.

The State is a product of man's mind: to reform the State, we must reform man's mind. Justice is nothing external: it is a habit of mind; and true justice can only be realised when the mind acquires its true habit. On the other hand the possibility of a permanent reform of men's minds depends, to some extent, on the character of the social conditions in which they have to work: and the reign of justice, if it primarily depends on the presence of a habit of mind set towards the discharge of specific function, depends also, in some degree, on the absence of material conditions which are inimical to such concentration. It is no disloyalty to the spirit, after all, to recognise that material conditions exist, and can affect its life, for better or worse, according as they are favourable or unfavourable.[1]

Plato believed that conditions were most favourable for the life of the spirit under a system of communism. In itself, the idea of communism—at any rate in respect of property—was by no means foreign to the Greek world. There is some reason for thinking that in the early days of the race, before the Greeks turned to agriculture, the land was held in common, and belonged, if not to the State, at any rate to the groups of tribe and clan. When, in the days of agriculture, the land came to be divided in private holdings, such division would be the work of the State. Each man would receive his lot (κλῆρος); and it seems like a reminiscence of such an allotment that in later days, when many have lost their lots, and a few have engrossed large holdings, there arises a demand for "redivision of the land" (γῆς ἀναδασμός). In historical times, even in an individualistic and modern community such as Athens, the State still exercised a supervision over private property, and it still retained property of its own in forests and quarries and mines.[2] In communities less advanced traces of communism long survived. In Sparta there was, indeed, a system of private property; but the produce of the lot of a Spartan citizen, which was tilled on his behalf by serfs, went to furnish the common tables (συσσίτια) at which the citizens messed together.[3] Community of use was thus joined with private possession; and this also showed itself in other Spartan customs, such as the right of one citizen to take food from the house of another in the country, or to use another's dogs and horses, and even slaves, as if they were his own.[4] In Crete, a Doric community like Sparta, the approach to communism went further: each of the

[1] *Cf.* 416 C: "Over and above the education we have described, any wise man would say that the houses and other property of the guardians should be so arranged as not only not to interfere with their excellence as guardians, but also not to tempt them to do wrong to the other citizens". This passage not only shows that communism is a corollary to education (πρὸς τῇ παιδείᾳ): it also indicates, in its accumulation of negatives, the negative character of Plato's communism (*cf. infra*, p. 212).

[2] Wilamowitz, *Staat und Gesellschaft*, p. 61.

[3] At Athens the magistrates only had common meals; but the ordinary citizen drew pay from the State for his attendance at the law-courts and in the Assembly.

[4] Aristotle, *Pol.*, II. 5, § 7 (1263, a 35-7).

communities of the island had public estates tilled by public serfs; and their revenue was appropriated to the furnishing of provisions for the dining-clubs (ἀνδρεῖα), and to the general expenses of government. It is in these Spartan and Cretan practices that we may trace the closest affinities to the system proposed by Plato in the *Republic*.[1]

Nor was communism unknown to the Greeks as a matter of theory, even before it was advocated by Plato. We need not ascribe the origin of a theory of communism to the Pythagoreans, into whose tenets a later generation read much that was Platonic; but within its own ranks, at any rate, the Pythagorean circle had professed the motto that "friends' goods were common goods," and Plato quotes that motto in the *Republic*. It is in Athens, and during the later fifth century, that communistic theories definitely appear. There was never, it is true, a socialistic party, or any serious socialistic propaganda, at Athens, partly because the genius of the Athenian community, in the age of Pericles, was definitely individualistic, and partly, it has been suggested, because of "the rooted dislike of the Greeks, and, chief among Greeks, of the Athenians, to discipline and organisation".[2] But radical speculation, here as in other respects, ran far ahead of ordinary social opinion. The right of property in slaves was attacked; and it was an easy step to attack the right of property in general. One of the bases for such an attack may have been the growing tendency to idealise the ways and institutions of 'nature peoples,' who were free from the 'conventions' of civilised life. This tendency, as we shall see, was one of the bases of the idea of community of wives; and it may also have served as a basis for the idea of community of property. The two ideas were closely connected: the premiss of both was the abolition of the family, and, with the family, its institutions—in the one case monogamy; in the other private property. This connection may be traced, and the idea of community of property definitely appears, in the *Ecclesiazusæ* of Aristophanes, which was produced some time before the year 390, and probably in the year 393, and to which there is good reason for believing that Plato alludes in the fifth book of the *Republic*.[3] Imagining women in control of affairs at Athens, and a

[1] Plato himself, in the eighth book (547-8), in speaking of timocracy, treats these practices as nearest to—in the sense that they are the *first* corruption of—the system of his ideal State.

[2] Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 287-8.

[3] The relation of the *Ecclesiazusæ* to the *Republic* is a vexed question. One theory, which has a considerable measure of support, is that Aristophanes, writing after the *Republic* (or at any rate a first draft of the *Republic*) had appeared, was satirising Plato (*cf.* Rogers' introduction to his edition of the play, pp. xxi-xxviii). According to another view, which seems to me far more probable, the *Ecclesiazusæ* was written before the *Republic*, which appeared about 387, and Plato is seeking, in the fifth book of the *Republic*, to meet the current satire on communism, including that of Aristophanes. The whole question is exhaustively examined by Adam in his edition of the *Republic*, Vol. I, pp. 345-55. In any case, Aristophanes' satire is directed against something which Plato did not advocate—a scheme of communism in which all share, and in which all things, including land, are held in common.

scheme of community of wives in operation, Aristophanes suggests, as part of the scheme, a system of common property—

> The silver, and land, and whatever beside
> Each man shall possess, shall be common and free—[1]

and he proceeds to indulge in a satire, after his manner, on the radical theories of his age, and especially on the "naturalism" which would turn men into the likeness of savages or even of animals.

Plato's own advocacy of communism of property is, however, far from being naturalistic. In dealing with community of wives he uses natural analogies; but the arguments he uses in advocating community of property are entirely ethical. We have seen that Plato begins the *Republic* with the idea of combating and destroying a false conception of the self as an isolated unit concerned with its own satisfaction It is his aim to substitute a conception of the self as part of an order, and as finding its satisfaction in filling its place in that order.[2] This conception, we saw, is expressed under the name of Justice, and it means that each man should do one special work truly and thoroughly, and that no man should selfishly and aggressively trespass on the province of his neighbour. Now communism is to Plato the necessary result of this conception of justice. Two of the three classes of his ideal State—the rulers and the soldiers—if they are to do their work wisely, and to pursue it unselfishly, must live under a *régime* of communism. The parts or elements of the soul which they represent in the life of the State are reason and spirit. If they are to devote themselves to discharging the special duty of these elements, they must put aside that element of appetite, which not they, but the 'farmers' of the third class, represent; and they must therefore abnegate the economic side of life which is the outward expression of appetite.[3] A communistic life, in the sense of a life divested of the economic motive, is thus necessarily connected with, and necessarily issues from, the proper position in the State of the two higher elements of mind. Especially is it necessary as a condition of the rule of the philosophic nature, in which the element of reason is dominant. Without communism reason would either be dormant (while appetite was active in its place, and busied with acquisition), or, if it acted, it would be troubled in its action by appetite, which would tend to make it act for selfish ends. Not only is communism a necessary condition of the rule of reason, but reason issues in communism. Reason means unselfishness: it means that the man whom it animates abnegates mere self-satisfaction as his

[1] *Ecclesiazusæ*, 597-8 (Rogers' translation).

[2] Citizens are not "peasants at a fair, but common banqueters" at a festival to which each has contributed (421 B). The phrase, in the connection in which it is used, reminds one of a fine passage in Browning's *Rabbi ben Ezra*.

[3] "He whose desires are drawn towards knowledge in every form will be absorbed in the pleasures of the soul . . . for the motives which make another man desirous of having and spending have no place in his character" (485 D-E).

aim, and throws himself into the welfare of a larger whole. Through reason the philosophic ruler sees that he is an 'organ' of the State, and that he must put away the element of appetite, since what is required of him as an organ of the State is pure reason.

Such is the psychological basis of Platonic communism. But the basis which Plato himself emphasises, even more than the psychological, is the practical and political. He believes communism of property to be necessary for the simple reason that the union of political and economic power in the same hands is proved by universal experience to be fatal to political purity and political efficiency. The Guild Socialist of to-day teaches that, for the realisation of democracy, economic power must precede and control political. Plato teaches that for the realisation of aristocracy, in his sense of the term, economic power must be absolutely divorced from political. When he comes to analyse the successive corruptions of the ideal State, he traces them all to a single source—the union of the two powers; and he traces the growth of corruption to the growth of that union. Whenever such union is effected, two results follow: the holder of political power, intent on his economic interests, forgets the need of wisdom—forgets, too, the need of unselfishness, turning his political power to an economic advantage; and his subjects, despising his ignorance and resenting his selfishness, begin to murmur and to move until the State is split into two and ceases to be a community (417 A-B). It is from this practical consideration that Plato starts; and in this sense his communism, idealistic as it seems, is the most practical feature of his ideal State. But while it is practical, it is also philosophical; and while it is based on experience, it is also based on that theory of specific function which pervades the whole of the *Republic*. Men who have a function so exceptional as that of government must be exceptionally equipped: men who have a unique duty must submit to unique regulations It is from this point of view that the parallel which has often been drawn between the communism of Plato's guardians and the communism of the mediæval monastery is obviously justified. Guardians and monks are alike vowed to a high calling: guardian and monk must alike be free from worldly interests and distractions. Indeed the doctrine of the mediæval Church that secular and clerical function should be separate—the doctrine of Hildebrand—is fundamentally the same as Plato's doctrine that political and economic power should be divorced.[1]

[1] It would be interesting and instructive to draw a parallel between Hildebrandine and Platonic reform. Hildebrand found a church in which, through the Teutonic conception and practice of the *Eigenkirche*, the clergy were so tied to and controlled by economic interests, that they could not properly dischaige their function. He found a church, again, in which clerical marriage tended to make the clergy founders of families rather than pastors of souls. His campaign against simony and clerical marriage had thus motives analogous to those which inspired Plato's campaign against the immersion of statesmen in economic interests and family cares.

Connected as it is with elements which are peculiar to parts and classes of the State, and resting as it does on an aversion to the union of economic and political power, communism cannot be a matter of the whole State. It does not touch the third or economic class. A system which means the abnegation of appetite can hardly affect the class which represents the element of appetite. A system meant to deprive the governing classes of economic interests can hardly affect those who do not belong to those classes. The third class retains private property; but it retains it under the strict supervision of the government. The government regulates trade and industry (less by law, than by its innate wisdom): true to the main principle of the *Republic*, it assigns to each member of the third class his special work, in order that, each man practising his own craft, and no man interfering with that of another, there may be no dissensions, and it prevents producers from becoming either too rich or too poor, since both riches and poverty corrupt and destroy the State. But this is a policy of State-control, and not of Communism: it is a policy, which admits an individualistic management of economics, but regulates it by considerations of the welfare of the State.[1]

Plato's system of socialism, therefore, is one which has nothing at all to do with the economic structure of society—which leaves an individualistic system of production still standing, and does not touch a single producer. It must indeed appear a strange socialism to any modern socialist; for it is a socialism in which, limited as are the divisors, the dividend is still less. If there are few who share in the system, there is also little in which they share. The guardians to whom the system applies are distinguished from the rest of the State by being partners in poverty. Property they have none. Neither individually nor collectively do they own a single acre: the land and its products are in the hands of the third estate of farmers. They have no houses: they live "encamped" in common barracks, which are always open and public (415 E). This is a Spartan note, and the same note recurs when Plato proceeds to deprive his guardians, as Sparta deprived her citizens, of gold and silver. "The diviner metals are within them" (416 E); "and they, alone of all the citizens, may not touch or handle silver or gold" (417 A). Without land, without houses, without gold or silver, the guardians are to live on a

[1] The position of the third class in Plato's State is a difficulty, and Aristotle raises the question of its organisation. In truth, the class of producers seems to disappear: Plato is preoccupied with the rulers. It is noteworthy that it has no special virtue assigned to it: the ruler has wisdom, the soldier courage, but the producer can only share self-control and justice with both. The third estate would share in the benefit of some of Plato's reforms, *e.g.* the reform of traditional representations of God, and the improvement of music. Both of these would touch the lower classes, which must be supposed to have known myths and music, and would benefit by the purification of both. But it has been remarked that the third class is practically a serf class; and in some ways it corresponds to the serfs whom Aristotle proposes to use for tilling the land of his ideal State. Pöhlmann, however, seeks to justify Plato's treatment of the third class (*cf.* his *Staatslehre Platos*, pp. 138-47).

salary paid in kind by the farming classes according to a regular assessment, a salary paid year by year, and consisting of such necessaries as will suffice for the year. These necessaries are not divided among the guardians for private consumption: they are to be consumed, on the Spartan plan, at common tables. Platonic socialism, it is obvious, is a way of asceticism; and here again it parts company with modern socialism. The modern socialist, whatever the ultimate importance he may attach to community of education and the spiritual emancipation of the working classes, starts primarily from the goods of this world, and, assuming their desirability, he advocates a juster division of those goods for the sake of a more general diffusion of the happiness which they can give. His scheme is positive; and if, like Plato, he appeals to the conception of 'justice,' 'justice' does not mean to him, as it means to Plato, the duty of discharging an appointed function, but the right of receiving an adequate reward for the function discharged. Plato's scheme is, in comparison, negative; and his conception of the goods of this world is that they are hindrances. More than once the question occurs in the *Republic* whether the guardians, who are placed under this system, are not being condemned to forfeiture of happiness (419-421; 466); and Plato, though he seeks to answer the question in the affirmative, is yet clear that the principle of happiness resides in the State as a whole; that it is the general welfare of the State that counts; and that, for the sake of that welfare, the guardians must be compelled or induced to do their work in the best way, even if, in order to do that work in that way, they must lose the things which most men most desire (421 B-C). In a word, it is good for a society that the best faculties of mind which it possesses should be developed, and that it should be guided and governed by those faculties; and if, for the sake of that social good, some men had better renounce any happiness (in the sense in which the world counts it), they must face the renunciation.

Platonic communism is ascetic; and just for that reason it is also aristocratic. It is the way of surrender; and it is a surrender imposed on the best, and only on the best. It exists for the sake of the whole society, but not for the whole society. It only exists for the governing classes. In that sense it is a political, and not an economic communism which Plato preaches.[1] Its aim may be said to be the substitution of a trained and professional government, supported by a system of regular taxation, for an unprofessional and unpaid government supporting itself by corruption. One may even say that here

[1] Plato never quite proves the original thesis of the *Republic*, that the just man is the happier. It is assumed throughout; and the terrible description of the tyrant, the type of injustice, towards the end of the *Republic*, is the culmination of the assumption. But it is never demonstrated (*cf. infra*, p. 260 *sq.*); or, if it is demonstrated, Plato only achieves the result by a representation of justice in the individual (as a relation of the parts of the soul which issues in harmony and therefore in health and therefore in happiness) which hardly accords with the *social* quality inherent in the term.

is the Periclean system of pay (*μισθός*) for political work,[1] safe-guarded from abuse by being combined with the Spartan system of common tables, and reconciled with an attempt at professional specialisation which Periclean Athens would have repudiated. While Plato thus pursues a political aim, which issues in something of an economic programme, modern socialists[2] are primarily concerned with an economic programme, on which their political aims are consequential. Their primary and economic object is the socialisation of the means of production; their consequential and political aim is the control of such socialised property by a democratically organised State. They desire to rectify what they conceive to be the inequality and the injustice of the existing scheme of distribution, which is based on private capital, by nationalising capital and transferring the control of distribution from the private capitalist to the State. They recognise that unless the State to which such transference is made is a democratic State, socialisation and nationalisation will be empty words. The whole community, therefore, must own the means of production: the whole community must control, through such ownership, the methods of distribution; and this is only possible in a democratic State, where the workers, who will be controlled by capital, will themselves control that capital, and where, in a new sense, Rousseau's principle will be realised, that "each, giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody". Platonic communism differs from modern socialism on all these points. There is no question in the *Republic* of the socialisation of all the means of production. Plato is only concerned with the product; and even of that he would only socialise part—the part to be paid annually to the guardians by the members of the third class, who, so far as we may speak of capitalists, are the capitalists of his State. This is because his scheme of communism is secondary, and not, like that of the socialist, prior to his scheme of government, and because his scheme of government is not democracy, but an intellectual aristocracy. That aristocracy is compatible with a *régime* of private property among the working classes, provided some part of the produce of their capital is set apart for its maintenance; what it cannot tolerate, on pain of losing its efficiency, is the existence of private property, in any shape or form, among its own members.

[1] Plato himself says in the *Timæus*, where he recapitulates the *Republic*, "the guardians were to be like hired troops, receiving pay for keeping guard" (18 B); *cf.* also the *Republic*, 464 C.

[2] Modern socialism is Protean. The form which I have had in mind, in the comparison here attempted, is that which is known as collectivism. I have not considered modern communism, or sought to compare it with Platonic communism, because collectivism seems to me (as communism does not) to be a definite ideal definitely comparable with that of Plato. Communism in its modern form presupposes a community of goods on which each can draw—not, as the collectivist suggests, according to his services, but according to his needs. It means the abolition of private property: collectivism means the abolition of private capital (or "property for power"), but it leaves—provided that it is distributed fairly on the basis of social service—a large area of private property (in the shape of "property for use").

Yet though we may thus seek to distinguish between the aims of the *Republic* and the aims of modern socialism, we must not forget that there is identity as well as difference. To realise that identity, we must turn our attention to another aspect of Plato's communism. It is not only meant to prepare a broad highway for specialisation of function; it is also meant to ensure the unity of the State. It is true that to secure the former of these aims is also, in a great degree, to secure the latter. If the upper classes are set apart to perform their special function, and freed from all hindrances to its performance, there will be no more of that competition for power and office, which destroys political unity and plunges States in sedition and civil war. But Plato believes that his scheme of communism will have a direct and positive influence in producing political unity. Under that scheme the guardians will have put away every selfish interest or tendency; and they will devote themselves with a single eye to the general interest (464 C-D). They will be naturally loved by those whom they rule, because they are saviours and helpers, not masters; and they will naturally love in turn the subjects to whom they owe their sustenance, because these are not slaves to be despised, but maintainers and foster-fathers to be cherished (463 A-B). Rulers and subjects will thus be knit together by a mutual regard not only based on difference of function, but also on mutual need and mutual gratitude. Different as his means may be, the ends of the modern socialist are fundamentally of the same character. To him too the goal is unity and solidarity: to him too the enemy to be destroyed is selfish competition. He would banish the unchecked competition of individual with individual for economic power, exactly as Plato sought to banish the unchecked competition of one selfish unit with another for political power: he would eliminate the doctrine of the economic man, exactly as Plato sought to eliminate the doctrine of the 'superman'. Like Plato, he pursues an ideal of justice; and if his justice, at first sight, seems to mean a larger share of this world's goods, ultimately it means, as it meant to Plato, an order of society in which each man does his appointed work for the sustentation of the whole, and all are knit together by mutual need and regard. He thus attempts to realise the conception of a social whole, of which all are members, and of a social interest, in securing which each man secures his own; and here his feet are on the ground which Plato trod before. In a word, the ideal of both is that of a society organised on the basis, not of differences in birth or in wealth, but of common social service.

And yet, as it stands, the communism of Plato remains what has been called a "half communism".[1] It is not an institution of the social whole. It affects less than half of the persons, and much less than half of the goods, of the society to which it belongs. Two dif-

[1] Natorp, *Plato's Staat und die Idee der Sozialpädagogik.*

ficulties suggest themselves, the one practical, the other theoretical. In the first place, how can a system of communism peculiar to one part of society be fused in practice with a system of private property peculiar to the rest? Plato, after denouncing the system of the "two States" within the State, seems to recur to the same practice which he has denounced;[1] and after protesting against sedition, he creates a State whose structure invites division. If private property is the cause of dissension, why should it still be tolerated among the members of the third class? It will breed dissension in that class; and the guardians, deprived as they are of material means, may be unable to control the dissensions of a class which has the power derived from the possession of property. Nor is it easy to see how a spiritual hierarchy, destitute of property and devoid of the motives which accompany its possession, can understand or control the motives and actions of ordinary men. This brings us to the theoretical difficulty of Plato's scheme. Is a system of half communism really the logical deduction from his own premisses, and would not a system of general communism, common to all the classes of the State, have satisfied those premisses better? The answer obviously depends on the exact nature of his premisses. He assumes that, because there are three elements in the human mind, there are three classes in the State corresponding to those three elements; and he further assumes that, because each of the elements of the mind should be limited to its appointed work, each of the three classes of the State should be limited to the operation of the element of mind to which it corresponds. In this way he arrives at a system of communism for the ruling and fighting classes, on the ground that it is necessary for the operation of the elements of reason and spirit which they represent, and a system of private property for the producing class, on the ground that it is consequential on the operation of the element of appetite represented by that class. If we accept these premisses, and if we thus postulate a three-class system in which each class represents a different element of mind, we can only arrive at the system of half communism at which Plato arrives. We shall only attain a system of general communism if we start from a different set of premisses. We may urge that if all of us, as individuals, have three elements of mind, all of us, as constituent members of society, have also three elements—though some of us may have more of one than we have of another; and we may further urge that if all of us have these three elements, all of us should be allowed to put them in operation, and to enjoy the conditions necessary for their operation. This would involve the result, on the one hand that appetite should be operative among the guardians, who would therefore share in economic activity and shed the peculiar communism which bars them from such activity; and, on

[1] This is one of Aristotle's criticisms (*Politics*, II. 5, § 20, 1264, a 24–6). The main lines of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's system of community of property are clearly expressed in the course of this chapter of the *Politics*.

the other hand, that reason should be operative among the members of the producing class, who would therefore share in rational development, and also, if communism is a necessary condition of such development, in a system of general communism. If we argue in this way; if we assume that reason is general, and should operate generally; if we assume further that communism is necessary to the general operation of reason—because it is a necessary condition of that community of education without which there can be no such general operation—then we may deduce from our premisses the full communism which Plato fails to deduce from his. But we have only attained this result by altering the premisses of the argument. We have not interpreted Plato: we have rewritten him.

It is thus hardly necessary to explain why Plato failed to arrive at a system of general communism.[1] The suggestion has been made that his failure was due to his immersion in practical considerations. He saw, it has been urged, an immediate practical hope in a scheme which placed the aristocratic class of the Greek city-state under a system of communism, and which set that class, thus safeguarded, and trained for its work by philosophy, to rescue politics from the degradation into which they had fallen. His hope was in the rich young rulers: he appealed "to the philosophic nobility of the Greek people," as Luther originally appealed *an den christlichen Adel Deutscher Nation*. The nobles were already free from economic cares: why not extend that freedom further by a system of communism in which they should share? They had already been attracted by Socrates to the pursuit of knowledge: why should they not be attracted to the full study of mathematics and dialectic? It is true enough that Plato was no mere idealist, in the loose and inaccurate sense of that word: it is true enough that all that he advocated in the *Republic* was meant to be put into action, and into immediate action, in the quickest and most practicable way. But there is no need for any recourse to such considerations in order to explain why Plato stopped short of general communism. The simple fact is that such a system does not square with, and cannot be deduced from, his general principles. In spite of his emphasis on unity, to which he sacrifices, as we shall see, the difference of sex, he lays no less emphasis on difference and specialisation, and for their sake he retains and accentuates the difference of class. He is convinced of the uniqueness of rational knowledge: he is convinced of the difference between the men who are capable of such knowledge

[1] *Cf.* Natorp, *op. cit.* I cannot agree with Natorp's interpretation of the passage in the *Laws* (739) as referring to a general communism of all in all things, under which the land is held in common; and still less with his view that the passage proves that Plato, after all, believed in general communism as the perfect ideal. The passage seems to me to refer to the scheme of the *Republic*. The language may be loose; but it is hardly possible that Plato should mention incidentally, in one passage of a later work, a system entirely different from that of the *Republic*, and mention it, too, as a higher ideal (*cf. infra*, p. 319 n. 1).

and the rest of mankind; and holding communism to be the condition of their perfection, he associates communism with them—and with them alone.

Community of Wives

Plato's scheme not only embraces community of property; it also contemplates community of wives. Both seemed to Plato to follow logically upon the aim which he proposed to himself. He wished the rulers of his ideal State to be troubled neither by distractions from their work, nor by temptations to self-interest. He had deprived them of property, because the care of it was a distraction, and the desire for it was a temptation. But his aim was only half achieved with the abolition of property. The family postulates property for its maintenance: it is a distraction from the genuine work of a man's life;[1] it is a temptation to throw oneself into self-seeking, which seems almost something noble, when it is disguised under the garb of a father's anxiety for the future of his children. The abolition of family life among the guardians is thus the corollary, and the inevitable corollary, of their renunciation of private property.[2]

The advocacy of community of wives occupies a much larger proportion of the argument of the *Republic* than the advocacy of community of property. The space devoted to the latter is slight. Plato does not regard community of goods as a paradox, and he does not trouble to defend it against possible criticisms. He feels, however, that what he has to say of the family is a paradox, and indeed, as we shall see, a double paradox; and he defends that paradox vigorously from criticisms such as had been levelled by Aristophanes in the *Ecclesiazusae*, a few years before, against similar ideas. For Plato's scheme, which entails the participation of women in the education and the occupations of men, and the consequent abolition of the family in favour of a system of temporary and State-regulated marriage, was not without its precedents and its forerunners. In spite of Aristotle's remark, that "no one else has introduced such novelties as community of women,"[3] we may trace such ideas before the time of Plato. There was a natural basis for their germination in the practice of nature-peoples. Herodotus already records how "the Agathyrsians have their women in common, that they may be brothers to one another, and being all kinsmen, show no envy or hatred to one another," and, again, how "the women of the Sauromatians go hunting on horseback with men . . . and go fighting, and wear the same dress as men".[4] In Sparta women shared to some

[1] *Cf.* Zola's saying: "On donne sa virilité à son œuvre".

[2] Plato recognises that property and the family are interdependent facts. The most thorough-going modern socialists equally recognise that socialism, which means a revolution in property, must also involve a reformation of the family.

[3] *Politics*, II. 7, § 1 (1266, a 34).

[4] Herodotus, IV. 104, 116; *cf.* also IV. 180, to which Aristotle refers, *Politics*, II. 3, § 9 (1262, a 19).

extent in the training of men: there was little family life; and wives might be lent by their husbands to produce children for the service of the State. At Athens, where the position of women was very different, there had been advocates even in the fifth century of a change in the relations between the sexes. Euripides had attacked "the subjugation of women" in the *Medea*, and in a fragment of the *Protesilaus* he appears as an advocate of community of wives.[1] The *Ecclesiazusœ* shows that such a scheme was current enough to be made an object of satire by Aristophanes, who was always quick to detect and attack the radical ideas of advanced circles at Athens. Finally, Socrates himself, if we may trust the account of Xenophon, had held that there was no difference in kind between the natural endowment of women and that of men, though women were inferior in strength and in judgment;[2] and like Plato after him (and indeed like the Greeks in general) he had regarded marriage not as a *consortium vitae*, but as a means for the production of children and the breeding of a good stock.[3]

We have indeed to remember that the general Greek view of the relations of the sexes was in many ways different from modern views. The public life of the Greek streets and places of assembly was a masculine life. Men met men in the market-place and assembly and gymnasia: "the Greek city was for most purposes a men's club". The women sat in their women's quarter at home and spun and bore children. They were married early, about the age of fifteen; and when they married they passed from the seclusion of the women's quarter in one house to the seclusion of that in another. They saw few men besides their husbands: the social gatherings of the Greeks were as masculine as the rest of their lives. Marriage was regarded as a means, and a wife as an instrument, for the procreation of lawful issue for the service of the State. Family life thus meant less to the Greek than it does to us:[4] he lived in the open, as a 'political being,' while women, except at Sparta, were condemned to something of an Oriental seclusion, and taught to think that they should be neither seen nor heard. All these are conceptions which Plato partly inherits and partly combats. He inherits the conception of marriage as a union of the sexes for the purpose of begetting children: he sees in marriage nothing of a sacrament, nothing of a spiritual communion of husband and wife, nothing of a creation of an inner and sacred society of the family. On the other hand he combats the general Greek practice of con-

[1] *Medea*, 230 *sqq.*: Fragm. 655.
[2] Xen. *Sympos.*, 2 § 9. [3] *Ibid.*, *Mem.*, II. 2, § 4.
[4] This is not the same as to say that *l'esprit de la famille* was not present in Greece. On the contrary, if family feeling was not intensive, it was at any rate exclusive; and it is exactly this exclusiveness which Plato attacks. He does not regard the family as too weak to serve any purpose, but as too strong to be co-ordinated with the unity of the State, and too exacting in its demands to permit the free development of its members (*cf.* Burnet, *Aristotle on Education*, 106 n. 2, 132-3).

demning women to seclusion and solitude, and he desires that they should be brought into the open life of the State, and into a full participation in all its rights and duties.

Starting from the latter point of view, we may say that Plato had set his face against the private household, with its secluded women, with its hoarded property, and all its narrow life, as something inimical to the unity of the State and the free development of all its members. We have already seen that, contrary to Athenian practice, he sought to remove education from the control of the family, and to give it into the hands of the State. We have now to see how, in order to perfect the unity of the State, by making the State itself, as far as the guardians are concerned, the one and only family, and in order to strengthen the State by setting free the best of its men and its women—but especially of its women—from the household drudgery that diverts them from its service, he seeks to remove the family itself from the life of his guardians. To Plato the home, which is so precious to us, was only a stumbling-block. "Every Englishman's house is his castle," we say. "Pull down the walls," Plato would reply: "they shelter at best a narrow family affection: they harbour at the worst selfish instincts and stunted capacities. Pull down the walls, and let the free air of a common life blow over the place where they have been." Thus the home is condemned as a centre of exclusiveness, where selfish instincts flourish; and Plato bids us see "each man dragging any acquisition which he has made into a separate house of his own, where he has a separate wife and children and private pleasures and pains" (464 C-D). It is condemned again as a place of wasted talents and dwarfed powers, where the mind of the wife is wasted on the service of tables (460 D), and "little meannesses" abound, "such, for example, as the flattery of the rich by the poor, and all the pains and pangs which men experience in bringing up a family, and in finding money to buy necessaries for their household' (465 B-C). In a word, Plato sees in the family on the one hand a root of selfishness, which may grow into family feuds and civic sedition, and on the other hand a drag on development, which prevents men and women from being what they might be and discharging the function which they might discharge, and therefore (since justice consists in discharge of function) prevents them from being 'just' themselves or making 'just' the State in which they live. The day of its abolition will be the day of the inauguration of unity (the greatest of all good things) for the State, of liberty for the individual, and of justice for both. In a sense, however, it is a mistake to speak of the abolition of the family as Plato's goal. It is really the reformation and transformation of the family that he desires. If in one sense he may be said to seek to banish the family from the State, in another and deeper sense he may be said to wish to import the family into the

State. Returning as it were to the old days of the tribal State, in which citizenship meant kinship, he would make the State—or rather the rulers of the State [1]—a family, and the family a State; and by fusing the two together he would abolish neither of the two, but rather the antithesis and the antagonism by which they tended to be divided.

There are two sections, or "waves," in Plato's argument, the one concerned with the emancipation of women, the other with the reform of marriage. It is in the name of the emancipation of women that he first (451 C-456 B) approaches the problem of family life. The seclusion of women in the household, he felt, meant not only that the development of women was stunted, but also that the State lost the service of half of its members. While men had pursued an ideal of versatility, and needed to be limited and specialised, women had been allowed no single function (except that of child-bearing and child-rearing), and they ought to be granted the right of discharging all for which they were naturally fit. In judging of their natural aptitudes Plato is first of all guided by an analogy drawn from the animal world. In an earlier passage he had compared the guardians to watch-dogs; and he now (451 C) suggests that, after all, dogs of either sex can do the work of watching, with the one difference that the female is somewhat weaker than the male. The capacity of either is the same in kind as that of the other: the training given to both is consequently identical; and thus, if we consent to be guided by this analogy, we shall acknowledge that men and women have the same capacity and need the same training. The difficulty of analogies for human life drawn from the animal world is, however, that the two are not *in pari materia;* and if we seek to fashion the moral world of man according to the non-moral world of animals, we may fall into the vein of Strepsiades (*supra*, p. 73), or like Callicles in the *Gorgias* (and like some of the modern perverters of Darwin's theory of natural selection) we may seek to identify right with physical might. But Plato does not merely argue from the analogy of brute creation: he seeks to prove his point by an analysis of human nature. He denies that there is any difference in kind between man and woman: if woman differs from man in sexual function, that is all, and she is in all other functions of life a weaker man, possessed of the same capacities but not of the same strength. It is absurd, he argues, to make a distinction in one function the ground for a distinction in all. There is no difference in the nature of women which affects their participation in political life (455 A-B). All women, indeed, have an inferior capacity to that of men, in politics as elsewhere: many women, like

[1] The producing classes retain home and family, as they retain private property. The same reasons which confine community of property to the guardians confine also community of wives, which is a corollary and consequence of community of property, to the same class.

many men, have no capacity at all for the political functions of the guardian; but there are some women who, in their inferior degree, have a capacity for discharging the same function of guardianship which some men possess, and these must be trained and must serve as guardians in common with the men who are similarly qualified. Otherwise the principle of justice will be defeated, and there will be elements in the State which are not discharging the proper function for which they are qualified by their nature. Plato, we may perceive, is a teacher not so much of woman's rights as of woman's duties; and if he aims at emancipating women from the bondage of the household, it is only in order to subject them again to the service of the community at large. It is for *raison d'état* that he desires the emancipation of women; if women are trained to perform the lighter labours of guardianship, the service of the State will gain new instruments and will thus be discharged more efficiently. Yet such service is after all true freedom: in it woman stands by man's side as his yoke-fellow in the fulness of his life, and by it she attains the fulness of her own.

But how is this scheme, which devotes woman to the service of the State, to be reconciled with the physical necessity of continuing the species? How can marriage, and the bearing and rearing of children, among the class of the guardians, be dovetailed into a plan, which subtracts the woman from the life of the family? Let us suppose for a moment that monogamy were still to be practised. The men-guardians, living in common and open barracks, have no place to which they can bring a wife: the women-guardians, living the same life and in the same way, can make no home for a husband. Under such conditions monogamy could only mean that the husband saw his wife occasionally[1] (perhaps in his barracks, perhaps in hers), and that neither could attend to their children, absorbed as both were by the State. But monogamy under such conditions, where the husband loses the society of his wife, and both lose the care of their children, loses its *raison d'être*. Plato therefore turns to a system of communism, under which the wives and children of the guardians are to be common (457 C-466 D). He had two reasons for preferring that system. There was first of all a physical reason. The analogy of the animal world suggests, that if you desire to have a good stud of horses, you must put a good sire to as many good dams, and a good dam to as many good sires, as you possibly can. To produce a good stock of citizens, the State must act on the same principle: it must supersede monogamy at will by communism under supervision. The men and women-guardians, living together in common barracks, and discharging their duties in common, will naturally have intercourse with one another; but that intercourse must be regulated, and regulated with a view to the greatest benefit

[1] The young husband at Sparta only visited his wife by stealth.

of the State. Marriage must accord with the canon of utility; and if it does so, it will be consecrated by such accordance (458 E). In any matter of the continuation of a species, the greatest utility is gained when the fittest stock is bred from the fittest and ripest parents. This is true of horses, of hunting-dogs, of game-birds: it is no less true of men. The best among the men and women-guardians must therefore be united, at the proper age and at stated seasons, in temporary marriages; and the off-spring of such marriages, and of such marriages only, must be reared by the State. Here there is no promiscuity: there is the very opposite of promiscuity. Plato dreams of solemn and State-controlled nuptials, directed to eugenic ends; and far from abolishing, he seeks to consecrate marriage, by making it serve the consecrating final cause, from which alone comes every good and consecrated state—the greatest good of the community.

This is the first and physical reason for the reform of marriage suggested by Plato; and this is the first and eugenic part of his scheme of reform. But he has also moral reasons for the reform which he suggests; and these moral reasons are connected with the second part of his scheme. At each season of solemn nuptials, he proceeds to suggest, a number of marriages, sufficient to maintain the fixed and unalterable number of the guardians, will be celebrated; and when the children of these unions are afterwards born, they will be taken at once from their mothers to public *crèches*, and the parentage of such children will be hidden for all future time. The mother will have nothing to do with the rearing of her child: the mother will never know her own child; but all the parents married at a given season will be taught to think that all the children born in due time after that season are their common children, and all the children so born will be taught to think that they are brothers and sisters of one another. Such a system will once more satisfy the canon of utility, and it will satisfy it in a still deeper sense than the arrangements for the breeding of the best stock. There is no greater good for the State than the bond of unity (462 B).[1] What is most useful for the State, and makes for the greatest well-being of the State, is that its members should feel themselves one body, and should approach as nearly as possible to the unity of an individual (462 C-D), owning the same things, loving the same persons, and using the words "mine" and "thine" of the same objects. Plato's State is already one in the relation of its guardians to their subjects, which is a harmony of protectors and nurturers: it is already one in the relation of its guardians to one another, which is based on

[1] Strictly speaking, the greatest good of the Platonic State is justice. Justice, however, implies a single whole or system, in which each member acts as a part; and the greater the unity of this whole, the easier it is for each member to feel himself a part, and, acting as a part, to ensue justice. Being thus essential to justice, unity may be regarded as the greatest good of the State.

identity of training and community of goods: it will be finally one, as far as the guardians are concerned, if they are one family, in which all are related (or rather think themselves related) through a system which substitutes the idea of common for that of private parentage. Moreover such a system of common parentage will also produce unity in the further sense of harmony and consistency in all the arrangements and institutions of the State. It will be the proper complement, in the first place, of the system of common property. You cannot combine common property with private families; for the private family is the incentive to the acquisition of private property, and as long as it remains the instinct of acquisition will be active. Again it will accord with that abolition of laws and litigation which Plato desired to make one of the essential features of his State. It will mean a living spirit of family ethics in place of a dead system of legal rules; and men will freely do their duty by their neighbours from personal sentiments of kinship and affection instead of under legal compulsion (464 D-E). Sedition will never haunt a State whose rulers are a single family; and happiness will dwell in a community whose members are at once rid of the material cares and worries of the household, and knit to one another by the happy bonds of affection and instinctive sympathy.[1] The new city which Plato's imagination has compacted will be the 'home' of its rulers, who know no other: it will be their 'fatherland' not only in word but in deed, and the ardour of fraternal affection will reinforce the feeling of a common citizenship.

The eugenic element in Plato's scheme for the reform of marriage is less important in his eyes than the elements which make for the unity of the State; but it is an element which possesses considerable interest. The eugenic doctrine of the heritability of desirable qualities is one which already appears in the elegiac verse of Theognis:[2] "we look for rams and asses and horses of good stock, and men believe that good will come from good". In a later age Socrates is depicted by Xenophon as occupied by the problem of heredity, and seeking to explain why good parents do not always produce good children. Good stock, he argues, is not the whole of the matter: the parents must also be both in their prime.[3] In the *Republic* Plato faces the problem in a scientific spirit, using the

[1] One may argue that Plato takes too optimistic a view of the relations of relatives. "Blood may be thicker than water, but the skin of kinship is proverbially thin." But granting that Plato's view is true, and assuming that solidarity so perfect characterises a family, surely the family has a *raison d'être*—it attains a "good". Plato is therefore contradicting himself at this point. At any rate he is guilty, as Aristotle remarks, of the logical fallacy of supposing that what is true of a small circle of relations will also be true of a large circle of men if they are related. There are two factors, (1) the size of the circle, and (2) its relationship; and Plato forgets the influence of the first of these in producing solidarity. He abolishes the family circle, and yet seeks to keep the motives and obligations based upon it, which have no meaning apart from it.

[2] Verses 1183 *sqq.*

[3] Xen. *Mem.*, IV. 4, § 23.

analogy of animals, with especial reference to breeding studs of horses (459 E-460 E), in much the same way as a modern biologist. Believing, like Socrates, that offspring should be bred from the best stock when it is in its prime, he fixes the period of reproduction for men between the age of twenty-five and fifty-five, and for women between the age of twenty and forty; and he lays it down that if intercourse takes place outside those periods, the offspring should not see the light, or, if it does, should be put to death. Unlike the modern eugenist, who seldom advocates legislation, and generally disbelieves in the arrangement of marriages at Westminster, Plato trusts entirely to the action of the State, and is prepared to regulate marriage equally with art and poetry. One of the principles of his regulation may remind us of Malthus. He is averse to any increase of the population, not, as was Malthus, for economic reasons, or in order to stop population from outrunning subsistence, but for political reasons, and in order to maintain the political stability of his State. Like modern biologists, he believes that "it is not the maximum number, but the optimum number . . . that it should be the endeavour of social organisation to secure".[1] With this object he seeks to regulate the number of marriages; with this object he advocates a system of checks. He deprecates, for instance, the prolongation by medical skill of the life of chronic invalids: he advocates the procuring of abortion when intercourse has taken place outside the prescribed limits of age; and in certain cases he advocates infanticide.[2] On the whole, however, it may be said that Plato, interested though he is in the problems of birth, is much more concerned with the problems of education. Writers on eugenics distinguish between nature and nurture, and they emphasise the primary importance of the former. Plato believes, first and foremost, in nurture, and his emphasis is laid on the profound effects of the education of youth in a right environment. His scheme for the reform of marriage, equally with his scheme for communism of property, is secondary to his scheme of education.[3]

[1] Bateson, *Biological Fact and the Structure of Society*, p. 21.

[2] On this last point see Adam's edition of the *Republic*, I. pp. 357-60.

[3] Plato's three-class system is practically adopted as biologically true by Bateson (*op. cit.*, p. 33), on the ground of the heritability of success; and his proposal of a transposition of ranks, where "mutational novelties" arise, is also biologically defensible. It may be added that while in the *Republic* Plato advocates the marriage of like to like, in the *Politicus* and in the *Laws* he advocates the marriage of like to unlike. In the *Politicus* he argues (310 D) that marriage of people of like qualities results in degeneration: in the *Laws* he advocates the marriage of opposites (*τὸν ἐναντίως πεφυκότα ἐπὶ τἀνάντια χρὴ κηδεύματα πορεύεσθαι*, 773 B), in order that the whole State may be well mixed. This change in his theory of marriage accords with the change in his general theory of politics. In the *Republic* he had stood for the ideal constitution and ideal marriage: in the two later works he stands for the mixed constitution, as we shall see, and for mixed marriages. It is interesting to notice that in the *Laws* Plato advocates two eugenic measures—a tax on bachelors after the age of thirty-five (774 A), and an exchange, as it were, of health certificates between bride and bridegroom (771 E-772 A); (*cf. infra*, p. 329).

If we take Plato's scheme for the reform of marriage as a whole we can see that it has many facets and many purposes. It is a scheme of eugenics: it is a scheme for the emancipation of women: it is a scheme for the nationalisation of the family. It is meant to secure a better stock; greater freedom for women—and for men—to develop their highest capacities; a more complete and living solidarity of the State, or, at any rate, of the rulers of the State. It is easy to agree with the aims which Plato proposes to himself, but it is somewhat difficult to accept the means; and here, as elsewhere, one may agree with Plato's principles, and yet reject their application. Many may sympathise with his scheme for the emancipation of women; and yet the fundamental argument which underlies that scheme raises doubts. After all, the difference between men and women is not only that the one begets and the other bears children; or at any rate, if it is the basic difference, it produces a number of other differences which cut deep. The fact of her sex is not one isolated thing in a woman's nature, in which, and in which alone, she differs from man: it colours her whole being. She is by nature the centre of the life of the family; and one can only abrogate that fact at the cost of the death of the family—a price which Plato is prepared to pay. She has by nature a specific function of her own, which she will always refuse to delegate to a *crèche;* and the long period of growth and the need of nurture of her children (which finds no parallel in the children of "the other animals") will always make the discharge of this function the work of a lifetime.[1] The unmarried woman may enter into the open field of the world's activities: the married woman has her life's work ready to her hand; and it is surely the true policy of the State not to abolish maternity, but to recognise it as a function and a contribution to the community, wherein and whereby the mother, taking her station in the common life, and doing the thing which pertains to her station (τὸ αὑτῆς), attains to Justice.[2]

Much the same may be said of Plato's scheme of temporary and State-controlled marriages. The relation of husband and wife, like the relation of mother and child, is really the matter of a lifetime. It is impossible that men and women should come together merely for sexual intercourse, and instantly depart. They may meet primarily for that purpose, but ultimately, as Aristotle taught, they meet for a life's 'friendship': they are united by a permanent interest in a common welfare; and in the friendship, or permanent spiritual union, of true marriage lies one of the greatest influences towards a good life. Not only, however, does Plato make an unreal abstraction of the sexual motive, when he contemplates the regulation of that

[1] *Cf.* Aristotle, *Pol.*, II. 5, § 24, 1266, b 4.

[2] It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that all this has no bearing on the question of woman's suffrage (which is quite another matter), but is simply concerned with Plato's scheme for the complete absorption of women in political life and activity.

motive by the State for the sake of producing a better stock; he also makes of he individual a mere means, and that in respect of a side of life on which the individual most naturally claims to be an end to himself. He denies a fundamental right to personality, in a field where the sense of personality is most vivid, and where the whole man, body and soul, reason and feeling, "all thoughts, all passions, all delights, whatever feeds this mortal flame," cry for their satisfaction.[1] This, however, is a matter of less moment; and the fundamental criticism of Plato must turn on his refusal to do justice to the real nature of the marriage tie, which finds a much more sympathetic treatment in the *Ethics* and *Politics* of Aristotle, or to admit the moral value and necessity of the family. He abolishes an established institution for the sake of a problematic good; and in the name of unity he destroys a school of morals, in which duty is learned the more easily because it is tinged with affection and coloured by personal feeling. But it is characteristic of Plato, as we shall see, that in his zeal for the State he frowns on associations; and it is perhaps a general criticism of his political theory that it does not sufficiently reconcile unity with difference.

The General Theory of Communism in the Republic

Under the whole scheme of communism, whether in respect of property or in respect of marriage, there lies the assumption, that much can be done to abolish spiritual evils by the abolition of those material conditions in connection with which they are found. Spiritual 'dieting,' it must always be remembered, is the first and primary cure in Plato's therapeutics; but a ruthless surgery of material things is also one of his means. Because material conditions are concomitant with spiritual evils, they seem to him largely their cause; and since to abolish the cause is to abolish the effect, he sets himself to a thorough reform of the material conditions of life. By compelling men to live under absolutely different conditions in the material and external organisation of their lives, he hopes to produce a totally different spirit and an utterly different attitude of mind. The gist of Aristotle's criticism of this conception is simple: spiritual medicines are what is needed for spiritual diseases. Educate a man to the truth, and by the truth that is in him he will connect the very same material conditions, which were before connected with evil, with everything that is good. Material conditions are concomitants, and not causes; occasions, but not active forces. It is idle to tinker with occasions. It is more than idle: it is corrupting and enfeebling. To free men from drudgery is not necessarily to make them live the free life of the spirit; and one may doubt whether the drudgery in which the lives of nearly all of us are cast is not as much of a moral training as

[1] Plato has no room for sentiment. He meets it with a stern utilitarianism, curious in the author of the *Symposium*: "what is τὸ καλὸν but τὸ ὠφέλιμον?"

it is of a material necessity, and whether its disappearance would not involve the "life of swine" rather than that of "Olympic victors," as Plato prefers to think.

There is something mediæval in Plato—something of an ascetic dread of the world and its temptations. He does not indeed fly from the world to the cloister: he loves the "city of Cecrops" too much to leave it altogether for any city laid up in the heavens; and he would rather shatter and remould its scheme of things nearer to his heart's desire. Yet there is in him a temper of impatience with our human world, as there is in Aristotle something of the spirit which would strive to interpret things as they are at their best, and cheerfully accept what life can offer, believing

> There is some soul of goodness in things evil
> Would men observingly distil it out.

Thus Aristotle can vindicate private property, in spite of its temptations, as a basis of personality and an instrument of moral action; and so again he can justify the family, whatever its limitations, as a school of conduct and a preparation for the State. It is easy to accuse Plato of seeking to effect a spiritual result by material means, and to urge that in attempting to remove the occasions of vice he removes the occasions of virtue. Yet Plato's side of the matter is one side, and Plato's view contains one half of the truth. It were a grave error, after all, to think mind independent of its material environment, or to hold the unqualified view that "in social reform character is the condition of conditions". Shakespeare can speak of the soul of goodness in things evil, but he also speaks of the nature which is

> subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

It is often only a 'conservative opiate' to think that things need no change, and that it is the attitude of our minds to things which is at fault. The external things of life exist in the consciousness, and they have no existence for man except in so far as they are in his consciousness. If they are in his consciousness, they are part of the self, and self-determination means determination by a self of which they are part. Self-consciousness cannot exist apart from its content; and if the content includes external things which are evil, the determining self will determine itself accordingly. We have to remember, if we are to do justice to Plato, the real truth contained in his theory that the mind assimilates itself to its surroundings, becoming lovely when it lives among things which are lovely, and ugly when it lives among things which are ugly. While we may speak of the mind as distilling goodness out of evil things, we must not forget the opposite truth, which Plato so keenly felt, that evil things instil their own evil into the mind. It may be that he exaggerated the effect of environment;

we must beware of minimising its influence. Social conditions affect character; and there are still forms of private property, and features of family life, which warp or stunt the mind. Our criticism of Plato, if we venture criticism, should be less that he believed in the evil effect of evil environment, than that he believed some things to be evil which are not in their nature evil. The elements in the *Republic* which offend us spring, after all, from the sensitiveness of a generous soul, too much oppressed by evils—the canker of property; the blight of family selfishness—which were indeed real evils, but were not, all the same, the essence of the institutions they disfigured.[1]

It is obvious that Plato's attitude involves a certain element of reaction. Institutions, he believes, are a product of mind; yet he rejects many of the institutions of civilised life. This may well seem inconsistent; and the question naturally occurs, why the products of mind should be rejected by a thinker, who believes that they are the products of mind, and can only reject them on the strength of the conceptions of his own intelligence. It is a question which a wise reformer must always ask himself; nor can it but dismay him to reflect that he is opposing the conceptions of his mind to institutions, which have been created, maintained, and approved by the minds of many generations. But he may meet one question with another. Were these institutions the products of right mind, of mind acting in view of a true end and by appropriate means? Error may become inveterate as well as truth; and it has often been seen that the suggestions of some powerful intelligence, when backed by the influence of a strong will and an attractive personality, may enter into the life of a whole people without real examination or discussion. The historian sees that they have entered and established themselves: he readily believes in their sanctity; and he accuses those who aim at their destruction of the want of a proper historical sense, and of forgetting that "the roots of the present lie deep in the past". None the less the philosopher has the right to inquire why they came, and to ask by what title they exist and what element of mind they express; and if he is dissatisfied with the answer which he receives, he has every right to suggest what should have come instead, what has a real title to exist, and what element of mind ought to be expressed. But history deserves some respect, and Plato pays it little. He rejects many of its developments as mistaken, and he substitutes in their place his own ideas of what ought to be. Aristotle's criticism is shrewd and dry. "We must not forget that we ought to attend to the length of past time and the witness of bygone years, wherein it would not have escaped

[1] Plato, as he may be said not to be organic enough (*supra*, p. 174 n. 1), may also be said not to be ideal enough. He is so much alive to, and so much oppressed by, actual evils, that he is blind to the better side and the whole meaning of an institution such as the family. While Aristotle, less sensitive and more detached, can enunciate a philosophy of the family, or again of property and of the drama, Plato—too much, as it were, in a passion to provide a philosophy—can only furnish a critique of these things.

men's notice, if these things had been right and proper."[1] But, to tell the truth, Plato's ideas of "what ought to be" are not always so much the undiscovered novelties of latter days, as the remembered antiquities of an early past. We have spoken of an element of reaction: we might almost have spoken of an element of atavism. The "luxurious" State is in Plato's eyes suffering from a "fever": it needs a letting of blood and a purification. It must be brought back to simplicity, by which Plato means that the superfluous elements, which are not conformable to the spirit of justice must be excised in order that the whole may attain to such conformity. Back to simplicity it is accordingly brought, but the simplicity which is gained proves in the issue to be another simplicity—that of the primitive; and Plato thus seems to find the path of progress in the way of retrogression. It is a case of a true principle twisting round, as it were, in its author's hands, when it comes to be applied; and one begins to wonder if it was not more in earnest than in irony that Socrates found in the primitive 'city of Swine' the true and healthy type. Again and again this tendency appears. Music is confined to the simple and direct expression of simple moods by means of simple instruments: the element of reflection and of complexity vanishes, and the pibroch[2] supersedes the sonata. In Plato's theory of medicine the primitive element is clear; and when one reads of the duty of the physician to leave those who are chronically sick to perish, one is reminded of the savage who helps the aged to die by exposing them to starvation.[3] In the system of communism suggested by Plato it is impossible not to detect primitive elements once more. It has already been suggested that the study of anthropology was not unknown at Athens in the fifth century; and we have seen reason to believe that radical thinkers had sometimes professed to find suggestions for a reconstruction of society in those 'nature-peoples' who represented to a modern age the picture of what Greece itself had been of old. Similarly it would seem that Plato was tempted to reconstitute Greece by rejuvenating its infancy. At the bottom of the communism of the *Republic* there is perhaps not only something of the 'common tables' of Sparta, not only something of the Spartan customs of marriage,[4] but also some knowledge of the supposed community of wives among early peoples, and some inkling of the community of property which appears to characterise the village community. Even in Plato's conception of the unity of his ideal State there is latent an element of reaction: it

[1] *Politics*, II. 5, § 16 (1264, a 2); *cf.* also VII. 10, § 8 (1329, b 33), "we should make adequate use of what has been discovered, and seek to find what is missing".

[2] Webster following Jamieson defines the pibroch as "a Highland air, *suited to the particular passion which the musician would either express or assuage*".

[3] Plato's principle in this suggestion is, that there is no "right to life" in the individual as such; there is only a right to life in the individual as a citizen able to serve the State. *Cf.* Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 157, § 154, for Plato's view, and for its necessary correction.

[4] Sparta herself, indeed, in some respects, retained traces of an earlier past which other Greek States had outgrown.

is a tribe, or stem-state, knit together by the bond of blood. It seems easy to accuse Plato of an anachronism, or rather of an inversion of history; and to argue that he begins by assigning the unity of the State to the sense of economic interest, which is its final and conscious bond, and ends by making that unity depend on the sentimental tie of kinship, which is its first rude and unconscious form. And while such an argument would be in so far mistaken, as Plato begins logically, and not historically, with the economic motive, the accusation would at any rate have this truth, that the return to the tribe does suggest a failure of historical perspective.

The scheme of communism proposed by Plato raises a number of ultimate questions. Is it consistent with human freedom and individuality, or does it destroy such individuality? Is the system of philosophic absolutism on which it rests compatible with a system of individual rights? Does not Plato sacrifice liberty to fraternity by what Aristotle calls his excessive unification of the State, and equality to efficiency by the institution of his philosopher-kings? It is certainly Plato's aim to destroy mere individualism, to abolish individual 'rights' as construed in the proposition "might is right," and to deny liberty in the sense of "doing as one likes". But on the other hand it is as certainly his aim not only to guarantee but to develop individuality, in the true sense of the word, and with it the rights and the freedom it requires. The individual is in reality, as we have seen, part of a scheme and member of a whole. Such a conception of the individual is implied in a teleological conception of the world. Because the whole world is a co-ordinated whole, a single scheme and not a mass of units, the individual cannot stand by himself, but only in his place in the whole, and as playing his part in some scheme within that whole. Upon this conception, freedom will mean liberty to play that part freely: the rights of the individual will be those conditions which are necessary to playing that part and must be guaranteed to the individual if he is to play it properly. Freedom in that sense, and conditions of this kind, Plato certainly tries to secure. The whole system of communism is meant to set the individual free from everything which prevents him from taking his right place in the scheme of the State: it is designed to secure those conditions—in other words, to guarantee those 'rights'—which are necessary to the positive discharge of his function in that scheme. But, it may be rejoined, this teleological conception cuts the individual short, and limits him to being and acting merely in the single aspect of a part. On the contrary, we may answer, far from cutting short, it broadens and expands. The self is as wide as its interests; and the individual is narrowest when he stands by himself, with no interests outside himself, and widest when he exists and acts as a part, identifying himself with the interests of the whole body of which he is a part. The wider

the whole of which the individual can act as a part, the greater the sum of interests that he has, the greater is his individuality. The motto of life may be said to be "Live in as wide a fellowship as you may, and have fellowship in as many interests as you can".[1]

Liberty then need not be sacrificed to gain fraternity: on the contrary, through fraternity man comes by the fullest and therefore freest use of his powers. No rights are destroyed when the individual is treated as part of a community: rights belong to the individual as a member of a community, and are the conditions of his action as a member, secured to him by the community. The teleological conception is "the foundation for all true theory of rights,"[2] because it involves this conception of the individual as a member of the community, acting for its end, and guaranteed the conditions of such action. That no sacrifice of the individual, or of liberty, or of rights, was involved by his philosophy Plato felt sure; and he argued the point under the rubric of happiness. He urged that his guardians were happy, or enjoyed the sense of free and full play of their individuality which the Greek termed εὐδαιμονία, by acting in their appointed place in the State.[3] "In a proper State," he tells us, "the individual will himself expand, and he will secure the common interest along with his own" (497 A). Where, then, is the flaw of Plato's communism, so far as the liberty of the individual is concerned? Granted that Plato has a true conception of the meaning of individuality, and a true conception of rights (as the conditions of the free activity of the individual considered as a member of society), is there not some error in his reasoning? He starts from right principles: may there not be, here as elsewhere, defects in their application? There would appear to be two. In the first place, while it is true that the self should grow and spread forth its branches, it is also true that it must have a root. A wide extension of interests may be desirable; but such an extension is of little avail, unless it has its basis in a strong personality and the conscious sense of an individual self (φιλαυτία). Unless we premise such a sense of self, that which identifies itself with a wide range of interests is nothing; and the result is nothing. It is the error of Plato that he forgot the basis, in contemplating the superstructure—that in aiming at the extension of the self, he forgot that it must have a previous intensity.[4]

[1] "Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and the lack of fellowship is hell: fellowship is life, and the lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it shall live on and on for ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth from the earth shall wane" (William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball*). "To be no part of any body is to be nothing: and so I am, and shall so judge myself, unless I could be so incorporated into a part of the world, as by business to contribute some sustentation to the whole" (Donne, in a letter quoted in Walton's *Life*). *Cf. supra*, p. 177 n. 1.

[2] Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 57, § 39.

[3] Whether the guardians of the ideal State are really "happy" is another question (*cf. supra*, p. 212 n. 1; *infra*, p. 260 *sq.*).

[4] As Nettleship puts it, Plato is so much concerned with the virtues of *esprit de corps*, that he forgets "that corporations have no conscience".

Too often it is true that it is an ineffective, unindividual type of mind which identifies itself with a wide range of interests; and a strong sense of personality, though combined with a narrow range, will go further and do more for the world than any watery altruism (ὑδαρὴς φιλία). The diffusion of the one type has to be reconciled with the concentration of the other; and we must first know ourselves as separate individuals, in order to transcend such knowledge, and to know ourselves as part of a wider order and as serving a wider purpose. It is exactly this power of knowing ourselves as separate individuals which Plato really destroys, when he abolishes property and the family; for they are necessary bases of any conscious sense of an individual self.

It is thus one flaw of Plato's communism, that by abolishing the basis of any sense of self it takes away the possibility of the true sense of self which he inculcates. It does deny to the individual a right—a necessary condition, that is to say, of his thinking and acting as a member of society and expressing a social will; for it denies him that which is a necessary condition of his thinking and acting at all and of expressing any will. The other flaw which may be traced in Plato's reasoning is his demand that the individual shall identify himself with no lower scheme or order than that of the State. Such a postulate is too high for man. Every individual does and must identify himself with a lower scheme and a narrower order—that of the family. It is true that the State is a fellowship (κοινωνία), "and each one of us part of it"; but it is also true that it is a fellowship of fellowships (κοινωνία κοινωνίων), and each one of us part of these—which is the great lesson that Aristotle teaches. It is true again that the State is a product of mind—that it is mind concrete in an external organisation; but it is not true that the unity of the State is the same as the unity of a single mind, or that mind must be concrete in a single organisation, the "Republic one and indivisible".

The meaning and the bearing of the line of criticism here indicated may be realised more clearly, if we place ourselves at a point of view suggested by Plato himself, and regard the State as an organism—that is to say, as a whole of which the parts are organs for the attainment of a single end.[1] Of such a whole the human body, whose members are all organs for the purpose of life, has generally been

[1] "When we speak of an organism, we mean (1) a living structure composed of parts different in kind; (2) that those parts, by reason of their difference, are complementary to one another and mutually dependent; (3) that the health of the whole consequently depends on the healthy discharge by each part of its own proper function. . . . The State is not an organism; but it is like an organism. It is not an organism, because it is not a physical structure. It is a mental structure—a union of different minds in a common purpose. But this mental structure is like an organism, because . . . the attainment of the common purpose depends on the discharge of reciprocal functions by the different parts" (*Political Thought in England from Spencer to To-day*, p. 107).

taken as a type. The application of the category of organism to the State is necessary and valuable. It is necessary, because it gives a true idea of the kind of unity which exists in the State: it is valuable, because it is an antidote to false ideas of the unity of the State as legal in its essence and contractual in its form. Modern political thought has borrowed from biology an organic conception of the State, which it has opposed to the legal conception of a contract entertained by thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, exactly as Plato drew from his teleology a similar conception, and opposed it to the 'conventional' view of the Sophists. The emphasis which is now laid, as it was also laid by Plato, upon the organic character of the State is just and salutary. A contractual conception degrades the State into a business partnership (*societas*), whose members are linked by a purely voluntary tie of self-interest. They have put as it were their money into a concern which they have called the State, because they thought that it would pay; and if they find that it fails to pay—as the Sophists argued that it failed to pay the 'strong' man—they can and will withdraw from the concern.[1] The organic view, on the contrary, substitutes a vital for a voluntary tie. It teaches that the unity of the State is not one made by hands, and by hands to be broken, but an inevitable outcome of human nature and human needs. It teaches that the State can no more be left by its members, than the body by its limbs, and that its dissolution is as much the death of its members, as it is of itself. While in this way it attaches the individual to the State, as the outcome of his nature and the essence of his being, in the same process it also links individual to individual and citizen to citizen. Members of one whole, the citizens are members one of another: as every limb seems to ache when one limb is pained, so the poverty and degradation of one class must impoverish the life of the rest;[2] and the education and assistance of the weaker members is thus inculcated upon the stronger as the very condition of their own welfare. The conception of a common weal and a vital union supersedes that of self-interest and a casual nexus.

The conception of a common weal is very present to Plato: the quality which he postulates in his guardians is a vivid sense of its existence. Unity is very vital in his eyes: "there is no greater good than whatsoever binds the State together into one" (462 B). But

[1] Compare Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*: "The State ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper or coffee, calico or tobacco, or some such other low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties".

[2] The organic conception, as it presents itself in Plato and Aristotle, has, however, the defect of postulating members who are means to the life of the rest, and do not share in that life. And yet Plato argues from his organic conception of the State to the conclusion, that as in an organism part must be proportioned to suit part, and all to suit the whole—as no part must grow unduly, lest every part should suffer—so in a State class must be proportioned to class, and all classes be adjusted to the welfare of the whole (*Rep.* 420 D). But the other side of the conception is more prominent; *cf.* p. 236.

he may be accused of having pushed the organic conception too far, and of having attempted "to unify the State to excess" (λίαν ἑνοῦν). A true organic theory of the State must recognise that, while the category of organism is one which partly covers the State, and, indeed, covers it better than any other category, it does not cover it entirely.[1] In the first place, the State, if it is an organism, is one whose parts possess will, and with that will the demand for its expression, and with that demand a claim to private property, as a necessary subject upon and through which expression can take place. In the second place, the State is an organism whose parts are also members of other organisms. They are members for instance of the family, and the family is an organism whose end may be subsidiary but cannot be sacrificed to that of the State. Any organism which satisfies a vital necessity of human nature, like the family, must be indestructible, however detrimental to the organic unity of the State it may at first sight appear. But the zeal of the State had come upon Plato, and had come as a fire to consume whatever was not of the State.[2] A fire will not stop at exceptions; and these exceptions to the organic unity of the State he could not brook. Nor is this attitude of mind peculiar to Plato or to theory: it has, at different periods of the world's history, played a great part in the actual life of mankind. The conception of the State as the sole organism, to whose majesty all other organisms must be sacrificed, is characteristic of the sixteenth century, and of much of the French Revolution. It may seem eccentric to speak of the Reformation as Platonic; but in one of its aspects the Reformation was part of a general movement for State centralisation, which made for the destruction or utter subjection of all organisations other than that of the State. It is a movement which is expressed in Luther, as well as in Machiavelli, who are both its apostles.[3] In part that movement attacked the organisation of the Church, seeking to revenge itself upon the Middle Ages, which had made the State *ancilla*, by constituting the State *caput*: in part it swept away old mediæval associations of shire and hundred, as in England, and superseded them by the nominees of the State. Again in the French Revolution the same influence of a movement towards centralisation is seen. The Revolution of 1789 only annihilated the incapable despotism of the *ancien régime* to instal the crushing tyranny of the Republic; and the Church, which the monarchy had always attempted to bring into subjection under the name of "Gal-

[1] An organic theory based entirely on biology does not cover or recognise the moral aspect of the State as a society consciously self-directed towards a conception of the Good. Plato's organic theory, based as it was on teleology, does involve such a recognition: and the category of organism, as used by him, covers an aspect of the State, which as used by Herbert Spencer it fails to cover.

[2] In this respect Plato was true to the spirit of Sparta, where "associations intermediate betwen the State and the individual were either lacking, or had become mere expedients of mechanical subdivision". It was otherwise in Athens; and Aristotle, as we shall see, was true to Athens.

[3] Treitschke, *Politik*, I. 89.

lican liberties," was by "the Republic one and indivisible" swept into destruction. The argument employed in favour of disendowment is significant: the Church was a corporation, which in virtue of its revenues was dangerous to the unity of the State.[1]

Here we touch a vital problem—that of the relation of the State to associations. Of late years that problem has been much in men's minds, and under the influence of Gierke much has been said of the real personalty, the spontaneous origin and growth, and the 'inherent' rights of groups.[2] It may be germane to the argument, and to the understanding of Plato, to indicate the place which associations actually held in the law and practice of the Greek world. There were associations within the normal Greek city, such as phratries and tribes, whose members were united by a common cult and owned land and other property in common. "Each of these communities is a living being, which lasts as long as the feeling of community animates its members. The State itself is only the widest and most embracing of such communities: it would destroy its own *raison d'être* if it did not maintain and protect the others which stand beside and under it. The individual citizen feels himself a member of many circles, some narrower, some broader. . . . The living element which resides in each community precipitates itself for the Greeks in a god, or, more exactly, it is felt, because it is alive, to be divine, and thus to be personal, and it is finally called a person." [3] Thus the Greeks, if they did not attain any clear idea of a corporation as a juristic person, nevertheless regarded a group as being, in and through its god, a person, in much the same way as a mediæval monastery realised its identity in and through its saint. And so the old phratries and tribes of Athens, though they lost their character of kin-groups, none the less persisted, because they were persons, or because their god was a person, and they could not be destroyed without murder. When, in the days of Cleisthenes, the demes arose, even they, though they were local and artificial units, rapidly acquired a cult, a treasury and property of their own; so that it was a living society, and not a mere administrative division, which kept the register of citizens, and chose a list of candidates for the Senate, and performed the many functions which the demes had to discharge in the life of Attica. To phratries, tribes, and demes must be added the religious associations which clustered round a new god or form of worship: Dionysus had his θίασοι, and the Orphic rites their circles. Finally, there were the manufacturing or trading groups, which, without becoming

[1] The policy of the French government to the Church, and the passing of the law of associations, in recent years, illustrate the same point. France has a Platonic tradition of objection to associations (unless they are registered and licensed by the State); while England tends rather to follow the Aristotelian doctrine, and to admit the free existence of many associations and communities within the State.

[2] *Cf. Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, translated by Maitland (= *Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, III. c. 2, § 11), and *Johannes Althusius*. Figgis, *Churches*

[3] Wilamowitz, *Staat und Gesellschaft der Griechen*, p. 48.

exclusive guilds, might form associations, with a common hero or god, and thus attain something of the nature of a conscious community.[1] These are all facts which we should hardly guess from the philosophy of Plato; but they are facts that find their recognition in the theory of Aristotle, who can speak of tribesmen and demesmen as forming associations which are essential parts of the State, and of households and villages as its constituent members.[2]

Just as, strong in his sense of the close-knit unity of the State, Plato refuses to tolerate any other association, so he refuses to accept any individual member who is not a serviceable organ of its life. Social service is the one clue: there is no room for useless members in the body politic. Every element must be enlisted in the service of the State: the element that cannot be enlisted, and is unfit to serve, is an 'unjust' element, and it must disappear. This sense of the burning claim of the State on every citizen explains many features of the *Republic*. It explains Plato's attitude to the invalid (*supra*, p. 224). He cannot serve, and it is better that he should die. The note of efficiency in social service is here too strong for our modern thought, and this application of the organic conception of the State may seem to us perverse. We are inclined to argue that, because the State is organically one, it should carry its weaker members with it, helping, from the fulness of its common life, their defects and imperfections, and trusting that the life of the whole will be fuller of riches and tenderness because such members, who after all can make their peculiar contribution, find recognition and assistance. Plato, on the contrary, is ready to argue that because the State is a working organism every member must work efficiently, and each must carry his share of the burden—or depart. The conception of specific function makes him rigorous: he will not have the quality of justice strained by any false mercy. More than once he speaks of "drones" as the curse of actual States; and he is resolved that in his commonwealth there shall be no room for drones. This is the basis of his advocacy of the emancipation of women; for such emancipation is the one way of turning a sex condemned to the life of drones into a body of working bees. It is, again, one of the grounds of his treatment of art: art must be an obvious mode of social service, and therefore it must serve an obvious social purpose. Finally, it is one of the reasons for his theory of communism: for communism is a way of eliminating all the impediments which prevent the fullest and most efficient ardour of service in the highest and most highly responsible organs of the community.[3]

[1] Wilamowitz, *Staat und Gesellschaft der Griechen*, pp. 48, 51, 114. See also above (p. 43) on Solon's law of associations.

[2] *Ethics*, VIII., 9, §§ 5-6 (1160, a 18-28); *Politics*, I. 2, § 8 (1252, b 28) and I. 3, § 1 (1253, b 2-3).

[3] It is an instance of Plato's anxiety to enlist every faculty in active service that in the *Laws* (794 D-795 C) he insists that boys and girls should be taught ambidexterity, in order that they may use their bows and slings and javelins most effectively in defence of the State.

Plato is something of a political mystic, in revolt against the fact of difference. Like the mystic, he would so completely fuse the lover of perfection with its object—the guardian with the State—that identity is lost in the effort to gain identification. There is a deep wisdom in Aristotle's remark: "the unity of the State, which he commends above all things, would be like what is mentioned by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*, when he speaks of lovers, in the excess of their affection, desiring to grow together and to become one instead of two, in which event one or both must necessarily perish".[1] Unity, after all, is not the *raison d'être* of a group: it is rather the quality which a group must possess in order to attain its end. That end is the richness and fulness of the life of the group (which Aristotle calls *αὐτάρκεια*)—a richness to be gained through the different contributions of the different parts, which must therefore retain their difference; a fulness to be achieved through the energy of each member in its due place. Without *esprit de corps*, or the sense of a unity, that energy will not be forthcoming; but without this fulness and richness of life as its goal *esprit de corps* will only be pipeclay and regimental buttons. The best community is that which reminds every member that it is his duty to enlist himself in its service, but remembers, at the same time, that it is its own duty to elicit every energy and awaken every potentiality in every one of its members. For the fundamental reality is the individual spirit; and it is better, even when one is thinking of the social good, to think in terms of eliciting every innate power of that spirit than in terms of enlisting recruits for social service.

Plato, however, is by no means entirely a political mystic. It is hardly fair to say that he commends unity above all things. His ultimate ideal is justice; and justice means the discharge of specific function. Justice involves a number of corollaries. It involves the freedom of every part to discharge its function freely; and Plato thus speaks of the guardians as necessarily having for their duty the making of freedom, and bound to ensue only the things which bear on this end (395 B-C). It involves again the happiness which comes from a conscious sense of energy directed to right ends; and so he speaks of his city as founded for the purpose of securing the happiness of all its members (420 B). Finally it involves unity, in the sense of a scheme within which, and for the sake of whose realisation, each part discharges its several function; and so he speaks of the chief aim of the legislator, and the greatest good of the State, as the bond of unity (462 B-C). But it is obvious that unity which exists for the sake of justice can only exist in the form of differentiation. It must be a unity of different parts with different functions; and the whole structure of the Platonic State, with its three separate classes and their

[1] Aristotle, *Pol.*, 4, § 6 (1262, b 9-13). Plato's zeal for unity appears most obviously in *Rep.* 462 A-E.

three separate functions, is accommodated to this fact. Plato, after all, recognises the need of unity in difference; and we must remember that when he insists on absolute and undifferentiated unity, it is the unity of a part, and not of the whole, that he has in mind. His concern is with the guardians; and his anxiety is to keep them properly differentiated as a governing organ, as much as to insist on their identity one with another and their identification with the State. On the other hand, the guardians in the issue seem to become the State. The third class practically disappears: the auxiliaries are merged with the perfect guardians in a common communism; and the note of unity without difference is dominant. If we lay stress on this fact, then, with Aristotle, we can accuse Plato of political mysticism. If we lay stress on the earlier part and original scheme of the *Republic*, we shall hold the accusation to be captious and unfounded. It is a matter of balance; and each student of Plato must strike the balance for himself.

CHAPTER XI

PLATO AND THE STATES OF GREECE

The Republic *as an Ideal*

IT is easy to interpret the *Republic* as a Utopia, a city in the clouds, a sunset fabric seen for an hour at evening and then fading into the night. But the *Republic* is not a city of nowhere. It is based on actual conditions; it is meant to mould, or at any rate to influence, actual life.

In the first place, it is based on actual conditions. It contains, in the eighth and ninth books, an analysis of the actual constitutions of Greece, in which Sparta, at once a type of timocracy and of oligarchy—Athens, a type of democracy—and Syracuse, a type of tyranny, all in turn pass under review. They are all, in Plato's view, diseased. In all of them knowledge is stunted and ignorance of the art of politics is rife. In all of them elements other than reason—spirit, the fosterer of ambition and contention; appetite, the parent of greed and the cause of social cleavage—are overgrown; and selfishness, tearing cities in sunder, makes 'two States' everywhere instead of one. Diagnosing the disease after this fashion, Plato prescribes his cure—the sovereignty of reason; the training of reason in the ways of knowledge by a scientific and philosophic education; the liberation of reason from the yoke of appetite by a system of communism; the unification of the two States into one by the free working of a trained reason under that system. The statement of the cure, like the statement of the disease, is based on actual facts. The training suggested in the seventh book is the training which was actually given in the Academy; and the system of communism itself, though it goes beyond anything that existed or had ever existed in Greece, is but an extension of elements that Greece had known, or knew, either in her own borders or among the peoples outside the Greek pale. The *Republic* is not only a deduction from first principles: it is also an induction from the facts of Greek life.

Based on actual conditions, the *Republic* was also meant to influence actual life. It is impossible to read the *Republic* (or the *Laws*) side by side with the genuine *Epistles*, more especially the seventh, without believing that political reform was the preoccupation of

Plato's mind. If he was a political idealist, he was, in intention, an actual politician. It has even been suggested, as we have seen, that he fell short of a perfect idealism just because he was so eager to realise his ideal; that he failed to carry his principle of communism beyond the class of trained guardians, because he had hopes of actually realising that principle if its operation were confined to that class. Without going so far, we may certainly maintain that just because Plato's communism was the communism of only one class, and just because the education he desired to see was the education of a limited number of citizens, he believed in its realisation and hoped to secure its adoption. The city that he is founding is a Greek city (470 E). "It is not impossible; nor do we speak of things that are impossible, though even by ourselves they are admitted to be difficult" (499 D). "Not only would our laws be for the best, if they could be enacted; the enactment of them though difficult is not impossible" (502 C). "What has been said about the State and its government is not a mere dream, and though difficult it is not impossible; but it is only possible when philosophers become kings, or kings philosophers" (540 D). Granted the philosopher, and granted a *tabula rasa* for his work, the ideal may yet be realised; and Plato therefore proposes to begin by banishing "into the country" all the inhabitants of a city who are over the age of ten, and by training the pure innocence of children in the ways of ideal justice (540 E).[1]

But Plato has another point of view; and it comes to the front at the end of the ninth book of the *Republic*. "The city is founded in words; for on earth I imagine it nowhere exists" (592 A). Perhaps, he adds, it is laid up in heaven, as an ensample for him who wishes to see, and, seeing, to establish his life accordingly. The truth is that we have to distinguish between realisation of the ideal as it stands, in a single concrete embodiment, and realisation of the ideal in its spirit, as a permeating force in all societies.[2] For the former Plato hoped, but hoped in doubt: for the latter he hoped with a more assured certainty. Thinking of the latter, he can say, "It is no matter, whether it exists or ever will exist". It is built of thought

therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever;

[1] This passage is important as showing that Plato has in mind some actual Greek city, and the actual reform of that city. The passage, it should be noticed, comes at the end of Book VII, after the description of those higher studies which are to train the philosopher-kings.

[2] Adam, in his edition of the *Republic*, follows the view that a distinction is to be drawn between the Greek or earthly city of Books II-IV (which contain the first sketch of education and the suggestion of communism), and the heavenly city, meant for humanity at large, of Books V-VII, in which the suggestion of the rule of philosophers and the second sketch of education occur. The view seems subjective. The rule of philosophers, duly trained by science and philosophy, is an essential part of Plato's first (and only) city, which always remains specifically Greek (*cf.* the preceding note).

and it is enough if it exists, and will continue to exist, as an influence on man's thoughts and actions. Hence it is that Plato is not greatly concerned about the practicability of his ideal. The inquiry is for the sake of an ideal, and not with a view to proving that such things could exist in fact (472 C-D). The fact must fall short of the theory in its approximation to perfect truth; action must lag behind thought (473 A). The world of facts which we see is a world in which principles dwell, but in which they are conditioned, on this hand and on that, by this and that limitation. Our thoughts can think away these conditions, and our minds can construct a picture of the world as it would be if the true principles of human life had free play (501 A-C). Such a picture is not a dream. It is an abstraction, indeed: it is bare, that is to say, of the conditions among which principles must actually work, and by which they must submit to be modified. But though such conditions have been taken away, or thought away, the principles remain; and the principles are no dreams, but actualities no less real, and indeed more real, than those conditions. If, having made this abstraction of principles, we proceed to suppose different and more favourable conditions for their operation and to sketch their operation under those conditions, we are in a sense dreaming, and yet, in another sense—provided always that the conditions thought away are not inevitable, and the new conditions postulated are not impossible—we may be very far from dreaming. Everything depends on the society in which we live. If that society will think away, and put away, the old conditions; if it will think itself into, and adopt, the new—then the dream may come true, and the dream-city may become a builded city. There were times when Plato hoped as much of the society of his day. But even if this is impossible, the dream has still its value. It is to the good that we should have learned to distinguish between the essentials and the accidents of our life—between its eternal principles and its mutable forms. We are prone to take the society in which we live in its entirety—essence and accident, principle and condition—as one valid whole possessed of equal value throughout. The dream may lift us above that level, and helping us to distinguish the different elements of our life it may also help to give us more control over our life. And this is not all. The new conditions imagined in thought may become a leaven and a ferment, and the dream may live as an influence if it is not established as a fact. It may even live as an influence for many more generations of mortal men than it could ever have lived as an established fact. It is impossible to estimate the influence which the *Republic* has exercised in history through its operation on the minds of many generations. But it is perhaps safe to say that the influence of Plato's dream-city has been at least as great as that of the actual city of Sparta.

Yet Plato thought away many conditions which we still regard

as inevitable; and he thought into being others which we still hold to be impossible. Private property exists: the family exists: democracy exists. The one pure communistic state in history is that of the Jesuits of Paraguay: no civilised society, and no class in such a society, has ever turned itself into a single family, with wives and children in common: Marcus Aurelius was once Emperor in Rome, but even in his day the Roman Empire was not governed by philosophers. The principles of human life, after all, are principles which must operate among actual men. Human nature, as we know it, has at its core the sense of personality. That sense demands property: it demands the life of the family: it demands a voice in the direction of all the forces of public control to which it is subject. Plato would fain have transcended these limitations. He had seized upon the principles which are, and have always been, the fundamental principles of every State. He saw that the State is a product of mind: he saw that it is an organic unity, in which every part has a function. But he postulated conditions for the operation of these principles with which it is hard to agree. If the State is a product of mind, it ought not therefore to be separated into three distinct classes, with a special training for one of these, and a reservation of the work of government for the class so trained. If its unity is organic, that does not mean that the family should be abolished or private property destroyed. Plato speaks of a stage in the development of reason when, conscious of its new powers, it uses them as it were in play for the purpose of contradicting everything, like a young dog which fleshes its teeth by indiscriminate tearing and rending (539 B). But he had himself attained to a stage when reason is still more masterful and almost as destructive. He had risen above contradictions to the eternal principles of life; and in the strength of his hold upon them he was eager to enforce them on the world for its salvation. He did not sufficiently recognise that these principles had been working throughout history, under whatever limitations, and however dimly apprehended; and he was too anxious to make their conscious apprehension by the philosopher into a ground for attacking all their past works.

History may not be, what Burke held it to be, "the known march of the ordinary providence of God"; but it is at any rate (if it be not, as we cannot believe that it is, a chaos) a field on which the fundamental principles of human life have been steadily if imperfectly at work throughout recorded time. If there is such a thing as organic unity, there is also such a thing as organic growth. Growth, in the sense in which a tree grows, there never can be in human affairs; all the institutions of men, as Plato taught, are the creations and product of men's minds. But we may still speak of growth when we reflect that our minds create slowly and tentatively, with a conscious realisation of only those immediate purposes, which

our creations, as new purposes are added to them, and as they fit themselves gradually to our general scheme of life, may nevertheless transcend. If we call such growth organic, because, with all its differences, it has its likenesses to the growth of organic life in the world of nature, we may say that Plato failed to reckon with the organic growth of human institutions. He did not recognise the development of the past, seeing in it corruption from a fixed ideal rather than the development of a growing ideal: he did not recognise the development of the future, in which the ideal even of the philosopher will be expanded and transcended. He has a static ideal, which must be "preserved in its original form, and no innovation made" (424 B). Yet we have to remember that Plato lived *in juventute mundi*, in a Greek world in which the political creations of law-givers, like the artistic creations of the sculptor, were conceived to be fashioned according to an eternal type of truth and beauty. Upon us rests the *antiquitas saeculi;* and if Plato thought too much in terms of creation, and believed too much in a permanent ideal, we perhaps think too much in terms of evolution, and believe too much in *le mouvement nécessaire des choses.* Things only move when we make them move, by the work of our thoughts and the effort of our will; and our thoughts and our will must be directed by some ideal. Political life is the domain of making, and not of growth. It is dead without its idealists: it stagnates unless there are put before it visions of new institutions for the realisation of the principles on which it rests, whether they be, as in Plato's day, the institution of philosopher-kings living a life of ascetic communism, or, as in our own, the institution of a more perfect democracy controlling securely the means of production, distribution and exchange.

The Judgment of Actual States in the Light of the Ideal

The ideal of the *Republic*, we have seen, is not ideal in the sense that it is divorced from actuality (no real or valuable ideal ever is so divorced): it is ideal in the sense that it is an exhibition of what actual States would be, if they conformed with those fundamental laws of the constitution of human nature on which, even as they stand, they are based, but of which, in a greater or less degree, they fall short. Standing as it does in relation to the actual, Plato's ideal has an actual and practical value. Not only can it aid the practical intellect, by furnishing a goal and a purpose with which actual life can be brought into conformity: it can also aid pure reason, by providing a standard or criterion in the light of which actual life may be judged. "The inquiry into the nature of absolute justice is for the sake of attaining an ideal, in order that men may judge of their actual condition according to the standard which that ideal exhibits and the degree in which their condition resembles it" (472 C-D).

This is one of the great functions of ideal Utopias, such as Plato's State: even if they cannot be realised, they can yet enable us to understand the real. By showing us what the State would be if its immanent principles were fully realised, they show us the real significance of the State as it is. It is only in such an ideal aspect that the State can be understood; for if the mere phenomena of its actual working were alone considered, we should be able indeed to collect a number of facts about the State, but not to grasp the reasons for its being or the significance of its function. In this sense political theory must always deal with ideals. It must consider what the State might be, rather than what it is, in order to understand what it is. It must investigate the healthy or, as Aristotle calls it, the 'right' State; and the right State must be an ideal, because every actual State is to some extent defective and 'perverted'. Political theory must abstract the form of the State from the matter in which it is involved, exactly as geometrical science abstracts the form of the straight line from the matter of the solid in which it is involved. There is no straight line of only one dimension *in rerum natura;* and there is no ideal State. But Euclid postulates the one, and Plato and Aristotle postulate the other, as the condition of sciences which are none the less sciences because they proceed on the assumption of something 'unreal,' and indeed are only sciences because they proceed on such an assumption.

In the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic* Plato seeks to judge and measure actual States by the degree to which they recede from the ideal. His judgment of actual States takes the form of a description of the corruption, in successive stages, of that ideal. Though, however, his description thus takes a quasi-historical form, it is not an historical sequence which Plato attempts to trace. He does not imagine that there ever actually was an ideal State in the beginning, or that the order of the stages which he describes represents an historical series. He gives a logical and *à priori* picture of the course that corruption would take, supposing that we began with an ideal State, a perfect product of perfect mind, and that the degradation of that State proceeded from within, and not from the accidents of external impulse. The principle which underlies the whole sketch is the old principle, that the State is a product of mind; and the argument is that successively inferior types of State are the products of successively inferior types of mind. But the succession is a logical succession: the priority of the ideal State is what Aristotle would call priority in 'nature' (or idea), and not priority in time. Just as before we witnessed the logical construction of a State, in which each psychological factor was successively introduced, not in order of time, but in order of importance, so we now witness a destruction of the State, in which each psychological factor is successively taken away, again in order of importance. As the

factor of reason was the last to be added in construction, so, in the reverse process, it is the first to be taken away; and then, stage by stage, the State is made to depend on fewer and worse psychological elements, until in tyranny it depends only on appetite and the worst element of appetite. But if it would be a mistake to claim an historical intention for this sketch, we must not deny its historical bearing. These books have been called the first attempt at a philosophy of history:[1] if they are not history, they explain history, and show why history is a record, not of the perfect idea of the State, but of its various perversions. They show that history has not been made by the full mind of man, acting in the proper hierarchy of its parts, but created as it were by fragments of mind, each acting in isolation. And again, it is certainly implied in Plato that the ideal State, considered as existing *in rerum natura*, is subject to laws of historical mutation. It knows a process of growth and of increase (424 A); nor, on the other hand, is it exempt from a law of decay, which leads to its final collapse (546). A law of deterioration, such as is visible in plants, equally affects man; and an inferior progeny will in the course of time produce an inferior State. It is therefore implied by Plato that the ideal State will change, and, if it changes by a logical series of stages, will change in the way which he suggests. Aristotle criticises Plato from an historical point of view, and urges that, as a matter of fact, constitutions do not alter in the sequence Plato describes: oligarchy does not always pass into democracy, or democracy into tyranny; in actual life, a democracy will pass into an oligarchy as readily as into a tyranny.[2] The answer to this criticism is, partly that it is beside the mark, for Plato was not writing history or generalising from history; partly that, even from an historical point of view, Plato's sequence may be vindicated, if we do not regard the exceptions, but the general rule of constitutional change. The actual course of Greek history, it is true, often intercalated tyranny between oligarchy and democracy, and made tyranny the preparation for democracy, though there are cases in which democracy passed into tyranny, as it did at Syracuse in the fourth century. But the communes of mediæval Italy exactly followed Plato's sequence: the oligarchical *commune* either succumbed before the democratic *popolo*, or admitted it to a share in the government; and in either case a division of classes still survived, acute enough to paralyse the State and ultimately introduce a tyranny, open or concealed.[3]

[1] Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 299. [2] *Pol.*, v. 12, § 7 *sqq.* (1316 a).

[3] It has been pointed out by Lutoslawski that Aristotle uses Plato's theory of constitutional change, in spite of his criticism. It may be added that Aristotle's own account of constitutional change is not really historical, but rather, like Plato's account, logical. He starts from monarchy, which is the State of the perfect virtue of a single man, and sketches a succession, based on ethical grounds, of aristocracy, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy (III. 15, §§ 11-12; 1286. b). That succession rests not on empiric grounds of history, but on ethical preconceptions (Hermann-Swoboda, *Lehrbuch der Griech. Staatsaltertumer*, III. 1, p. 29).

There is thus something of an historical bearing in the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic*. On the whole, however, Plato is not occupied by problems of historical genesis, or in explaining how things come to be what they are through a series of years: he is rather taking a section, as it were, through things as they stand at a given moment of time, in his own day, and he is comparing, in the light of the criterion of his ideal State, the different values of the different elements of that section. His purpose appears clearly in his half-jesting, half-serious condemnation of the tyrant as seven hundred and twenty-nine times worse than the ruler of the ideal State. But we may perhaps also suspect another purpose. Plato is always practical; and even while the ideal is being used as a criterion by the speculative intellect, it tends to become a goal for the practical. The sketch of constitutional change and corruption indicates, after all, the true way of reforming corrupt States and restoring them to the level of the ideal. Corruption of the State, we find, always implies a corruption of the character of its citizens. States are made what they are by the type of mind they represent. The ideal State is ideal because it represents a type of mind in which a perfect adjustment of the faculties has been realised. A corrupt State is corrupt, in a greater or less degree, because it represents a type of mind in which such adjustment has been, to a greater or less degree, disturbed. But if this is so, it follows that the one hope of reformation of the State lies in effecting among its members a readjustment of the faculties of the mind. An oligarchy, for instance, can only be reformed by a readjustment which reduces the elements of appetite and acquisitiveness to due proportions. But such readjustment can only be affected by education; and thus the practical result emerges from Plato's sketch of constitutional change and corruption, that the way of education is the one and only way of political reform. It is of no avail to tinker with constitutional machinery (and here Plato is criticising in advance the line of argument followed by Aristotle in Book VI of the *Politics*): the only true reformer is he who makes his fellow-citizens better men.[1]

But the more immediate and obvious purpose in the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic* is the purpose which originally inspired the construction of the ideal State in the second book. Plato was led to the construction of an ideal State by the desire to discover the true nature of justice. He held that if justice were studied as it is writ large in the just State, it might then be understood as it is writ small in the just man. In the same way he is impelled to the description of States which fall short of the ideal by the desire to discover the nature of injustice; and in the same way he assumes

[1] Incidentally it may be noticed that the criticism which Aristotle urges against the Platonic scheme of communism (that it is too much a matter of changes of machinery) might have been urged by Plato, with as much (or as little) justice, against Aristotle's scheme of constitutional reform.

that if injustice is studied in the large characters of the unjust State, it will more readily be understood in the minute characters of the individual soul. Hence it is that as he studies the four successive corruptions of the ideal State—timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny—he follows with an exact logic the same order of procedure in every case, sketching first the origin and the characteristics of the corrupt form of State, and then depicting the type of individual character to which it corresponds and from which it springs.[1] Nor is this all. Plato's ultimate object in the *Republic* is not only to discover the nature of justice and injustice, but also to determine whether justice is happiness and injustice misery. In order to attain this object, he must necessarily describe, with a constant reference to the happiness or misery which they entail, the various degrees of unjust States and men; and thus he will be prepared, when the enumeration is complete, to compare the final stage of injustice with the ideal of justice, and to contrast the relative happiness and unhappiness of the life of pure justice and that of pure injustice (545 A : 544 A). From this point of view the genetic method pursued by Plato acquires a new significance. As step by step he traces the process of descent from one stage to another, it becomes clearer and clearer still what a gulf is set between the beginning and the end of the descent. We begin to be aware of the depth of the descent as we trace its successive stages; and we are prepared for the final verdict that the perfectly unjust man is at least four stages lower than the perfectly just, and "separated by an enormous distance in regard to pleasure and pain" (588 A).[2]

Such being the purpose of the sketch of constitutional change and corruption, it follows that its basis is psychological, in the same sense that the basis of the construction of the ideal State was psychological. The ideal State was based on a harmonious union of the three elements of reason, spirit, and appetite, in which reason was dominant. The next form of State is based on a less harmonious union, in which reason has lost its due place, and spirit, the element next to reason, has obtained control. The three succeeding forms—oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny—are all based on the supremacy of appetite, and the consequent discord, in a greater or less degree, of the elements of the soul. If three different forms of State are thus

[1] The fact that Plato treats first the State, and then the individual, in the order of exposition, must not blind us to the fact that in the order of causation the individual comes first and the State second. The State is what it is because it is composed of the individuals of whom it is composed. "The States are as the men are: . . . they grow out of human character" (544 E; *cf.* 435 E). Plato thus assumes, somewhat like Herbert Spencer, that the character of the aggregate depends on that of the units; and that, given a sufficient number of timocratic men, the timocratic State ensues. This is to forget that the relations of the units determine the character of a group no less than the character of the units.

[2] An essential purpose of the sketch of constitutional change in the *Republic* is thus its representation of the tragedy of the soul which suffers corruption and falls into injustice. In this respect the *Republic* is like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

based on the element of appetite, it would seem that there must be three different forms or degrees of appetite; and Plato explains that there is such a difference. In the first place, we must distinguish between necessary appetites, whose satisfaction is beneficial, and unnecessary appetites, which do no good, and sometimes do the reverse of good. In the former class comes the appetite for food and the necessities of life in general. Appetites of this class may be held to conduce to production, and they may be termed the acquisitive appetites. In the latter class comes the appetite for delicate food and, generally, for all luxuries; and appetites of this class may be held to conduce to consumption and be termed, accordingly, spendthrift (558 D-559 C). A basis is thus gained for the distinction of oligarchy and democracy: oligarchy rests on the appetites which conduce to production; democracy represents not only appetites of this order, but also appetites of the spendthrift kind. It would be possible to regard tyranny as resting purely on appetites of the latter kind; but Plato feels that its peculiar nature demands a further analysis of the elements of appetite; and in the beginning of the ninth book of the *Republic* we are therefore taught to distinguish between appetites which are legitimate or natural and appetites which are illegitimate or unnatural. The latter are the appetites of the wild beast within us: they differ from the appetite for luxuries because they are bestial rather than human. We may know their nature from the dreams by which we are visited in the night, when we have lain down to sleep uncomposed by meditation, when images of Lust and Crime haunt our pillow, and "the lawless wild-beast nature which is in all of us, even in good men, peers out in sleep" (572 B).[1] This is the element of human nature—if we can call that human which is bestial; and yet, because it is in all of us, it must be called human—which tyranny represents, and by which tyranny is bred (571 B-572 B).

Another factor which enters into Plato's explanation of the rise of perverted States is a doctrine of excess and the inevitable nemesis which attends excess. Each of these States in turn, pushing its characteristic principle to a point at which it recoils, is

Consumed by that which it was nourished by.

Oligarchy pursues wealth till it perishes of wealth: democracy pursues freedom till it is ruined by freedom.[2] "The excessive in-

[1] If we have meditated duly before we retire, Plato adds, the rational part is active in dreams, and we attain truth. Perhaps Æschylus meant something of the same order when he speaks of the memory of wrongdoing as trickling, drop by drop, before the mind in sleep, so that the wisdom born of suffering comes to men without their knowing (*Agamemnon*, lines 180 *sq.*).

[2] *Cf. Measure for Measure*, Act I. Scene ii.:—

As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that raven down their proper bane,
A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

crease of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction; and this is true not only of the seasons and of animal and vegetable life, but above all of forms of government" (563 E-564 A). This is a phase of that universal law of deterioration which affects both plants and beasts and the cities of men (546 A). The further one element of the State pushes a principle exclusive to itself, the further it recedes from the other elements. Division ensues; and division, the parent of sedition, is the most fruitful cause of political change, which begins in a disturbance of the harmony of the State (545 D), and grows with each increase of that disturbance. When in an oligarchy, for instance, the wealthy increase their wealth and emphasise the rights of property, poverty is automatically increased *pari passu*, and the proletariate begins equally to affirm that a man is none the less a man for being poor. Class consciousness develops, and with it class war; and revolution is easy, when once the conditions of revolution are present. When a body is once diseased, a mere touch may produce an illness; for revolutions, though they may spring from slight occasions, are always the issue of grave causes (556 E).[1] It is obvious that along this line of thought Plato reaches something like an economic interpretation of constitutional change. He believes that changes in the distribution of wealth tend to produce political changes. When once the ideal communism of the ideal State is disturbed—as soon as the citizens of a timocracy have introduced private property, and still more when the members of an oligarchy have made the accumulation of private property their sole object—the struggle to determine the distribution of property will begin to involve political struggles, and any grave excess or inequality in such distribution will lead to dissension and revolution. We should be guilty of exaggeration, however, if we regarded Plato's interpretation of history as primarily economic. His interpretation, as we have seen, is primarily psychological. It is true that the element of appetite, which is the psychological basis of economic life, underlies all the three last forms of States, and that this fact necessarily involves an insistence on the influence of economic factors in determining their growth and decay. But appetite is a wide term. As it is expressed in oligarchy, it is certainly economic in character. As it is expressed in democracy and in tyranny, it includes elements which can hardly be termed economic. Democracy

[1] "Revolutions do not arise on slight issues, but from slight occasions" (*Politics*, v. 4, § 1: 1303, b 17-18). The debt which Aristotle owes to Plato in the theory of revolutions expounded in Book V of the *Politics* is obvious. That theory is based on the doctrine of excess and the nemesis of excess. Aristotle draws the conclusion that if a constitution resting on an excess is to be preserved, a system of checks and balances should be introduced. In an oligarchy, for instance, the principle of wealth should not be driven to its logical conclusion, but a considerable element of recognition of the principle of freedom, on which democracy rests, should be admitted. A constitution will thus be preserved by being reduced from the excess to which it tends in the direction of a mean (a conception also applied to politics by Plato in the *Politicus*); and since the mean may be secured by a mixture of two extremes, Aristotle thus attains his characteristic doctrine of the mixed constitution.

springs from the desire "to live as one likes," like the birds of the air; and tyranny is based on the lusts of the flesh and the *cupido dominandi* which are strong in the beasts of the forest. In neither is the economic factor dominant; while, as for timocracy, its basis is not appetite, but the element of spirit and the point of honour, though it must be admitted that the pride of property is also an element in its growth and character.

A last factor which enters into Plato's account of the different forms of perverted States is his knowledge of contemporary history and his own experience of politics. The picture of tyranny, it has been suggested, is copied from the career of Dionysius I at Syracuse, where tyranny had succeeded democracy in accordance with Plato's scheme; and it has been noted that in one passage, in which he apparently alludes to his own experience at Syracuse in 387, Plato almost breaks the bounds of the form of dialogue and speaks in his proper person. The verdict on the tyrant, he begs his hearers to suppose, is given by one "who is able to judge, and has dwelt in the same place with him, and been present in his daily life and known him in all his family relations" (577 A). The features of the timocratic State, as Plato expressly says, may be found in the constitutions of Crete and Sparta—the Sparta, it is true, of an earlier age rather than that of Plato's own time. It follows from this that though there are Spartan features in Plato's ideal State, Sparta as a whole is far from being his ideal. It is rather a corruption of the ideal—a corruption which, in the fifth century, had not sunk lower than timocracy, but which, as it stood in the early years of the fourth century, in the time of the Spartan Empire, seems to supply some of the features of Plato's description of oligarchy.[1] That Athens is the basis of his sketch of democracy is obvious. The picture which he draws seems, indeed, almost a definite answer to the praise of democracy in the funeral speech which Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles;[2] while commentators have detected in the "democratic man" many of the characteristics of Alcibiades. But though there is thus a rich reference to history, there is no attempt to cover the whole ground of historical experience. Plato only selects the facts that suit his argument: he only sketches the constitutions that correspond to his psychological analysis; and he definitely omits in his scheme any reference to what he calls intermediate forms, such as dynasties, or hereditary aristocracies, or "monarchies by purchase," in which he would seem to be alluding to Carthage (544 D). He does not seek, because it lies altogether outside his purpose, to give any description or classification

[1] See Adam's edition of the *Republic*, II. p. 219 (note on 550 D).

[2] Plato must, of course, have read Thucydides. In one passage he certainly refers to a passage of Thucydides. His account of the inversion of terms of praise and blame in a democracy (560 D-561 E) corresponds to the similar account in Thucydides, III. 82 (*cf. infra*, p. 256).

of existing constitutions; and for such an attempt we have to wait until we come to his later and more realistic dialogues—the *Politicus* and the *Laws*.

The First Corruption—Timocracy

The first of the corruptions of the ideal State is timocracy, in which the element of reason loses its due predominance, and gives place to the element of spirit. Timocracy has in Plato the peculiar meaning of government by the principle of honour (τιμή).[1] The origin of this first and least corruption he ascribes, as indeed he ascribes all political change, to the presence of division within the community; and he therefore traces the process by which the balance of classes in the ideal State may be conceived to have been disturbed. First of all the scheme of marriage goes awry: the rulers fail to unite the right men and women at the due seasons; and a worse progeny is born. Inadequate for their work, the rulers of the ensuing generation neglect the scheme of education; and failing to elicit and enlist in the government of the State the best of its members, they produce a state of confusion in which men of gold are to be found in the ranks of the third estate, and men of iron and brass are misplaced in the ranks of the first. When the class of guardians thus becomes mixed, containing in part philosophic natures who cling to the ancient order of communism, and in part economic natures who desire to engage in the acquisition of property, division at once arises, and a struggle ensues in which the economic natures are more or less victorious. A system of private property is instituted: a society of landed magnates arises, in which the members of the third class sink from freemen to serfs: 'two States' have taken the place of one, and, as at Sparta, a class of masters has to keep watch over a class of helots. But the victory of the lower elements is not absolute; and the better elements still retain sufficient power to prevent the rise of a mere oligarchy, and to keep the State from being entirely devoted to the pursuit of wealth. The timocratic State, like the Spartan, which is its antitype in the actual world, is really based on a mixed constitution (548 C). On the one hand it has its affinities with the ideal State: it retains the system of common meals and a system of common education, though on a lower plane; and its rulers abstain from agriculture, handicrafts, and trade. On the other hand it has also its affinities with oligarchy: it over-emphasises the share of the body in education; and its citizens have private households, private property and (again like the Spartans) a passionate if secret adoration of gold and silver, which they love to conceal in private treasuries. But, mixed as it is, the timocratic constitution has elements of its own; and if it is a compromise, it is a compromise

[1] It generally meant a constitution in which power was given on the basis of a property-qualification. In this sense of the word Plato's oligarchy would be a timocracy.

with features peculiar to itself. Based neither on reason, though it has elements of reason, nor on appetite, though it has elements of appetite, it rests essentially on spirit (θυμός). The admired type in such a State is the man of high spirit and courageous temper, whose master motive is the point of honour, and whose ways are the ways of ambition and of war. It is essentially (once more like Sparta) a military State: the soldier has dethroned the philosopher, the passport to office is military skill, and the delight of the citizens is in military stratagems and the waging of everlasting war. In a timocracy, therefore, justice is already beginning to disappear, and injustice to enter: each element is not in its proper place, or discharging its proper function. The soldier has usurped the place of the philosopher and the property of the farmer: balance is gone, and with it unity: division and dissension have begun, and will continue, to grow.[1]

The Second Corruption—Oligarchy

Timocracy, as a mixed constitution, already contains some of the elements and features of oligarchy; but while the psychological basis of the former is spirit, that of the latter is appetite, and while the aim of the one is war and glory, that of the other is trade and money. The corruption of timocracy into oligarchy is the corruption of the military into the commercial State. Such corruption is easy. The appetite for wealth, which had already, if in secret, entered into the timocratic State, readily becomes the sovereign and open motive. The possession of property comes to be the justification for citizenship; and a form of government arises " which rests on a valuation of property and in which the rich have power and the poor are deprived of it " (550 C). If Sparta, in its earlier and more glorious days, seems to be the model for Plato's description of timocracy, the Sparta of the fourth century—whose citizens had learned, in the days of their Empire, how to enjoy the wealth which empire enabled them, often in illicit ways, to acquire—would appear to be the model of his sketch of oligarchy. In that sketch the element of injustice becomes increasingly obvious. In the timocratic State the rule of justice still found a partial recognition: the function of government was assigned to capacity of a sort, if only to military capacity. In oligarchy there is no recognition of that rule: the function of government is assigned on no ground of capacity, and the title to office is simply the possession of property. But oligarchy contravenes the rule of justice not only in its system of government, but also in

[1] In English history something like Plato's timocracy may be traced in the eighteenth century, when the landed gentry had annexed the land, and most of the peasantry were landless labourers; when incessant wars and the building of an Empire occupied the attention of the ruling class; and when the English constitution, though in a somewhat different sense from that in which Plato uses the term, was celebrated for its mixture of different elements.

its whole scheme of life. It refuses everywhere to assign specific function to specific faculty: it permits the same persons to have many callings, and to be husbandmen, traders, warriors, rulers, all in one (552 A). And as it is fatal to justice, so it is also fatal to unity. The few acquire great riches: the many fall into great poverty; and the oligarchic State, still more than the timocratic, is really two States in one—a State of the rich and a State of the poor. It is the home of a proletariate without land, without money and without occupation; and such a proletariate, always discontented, and sometimes, in its discontent, turning to crime, is an element of danger which threatens oligarchy with subversion. Even in the ruling class itself, which has the monopoly alike of wealth and of office, there is an element of danger present. Valuing wealth as they do, and living, for the sake of its acquisition, penurious and laborious lives in which all other passions are made subordinate to the passion for wealth, they have yet latent in their natures criminal appetites, which show themselves on occasion in commercial dishonesty, and may one day burst into full activity. The ruling citizen in an oligarchy is himself two men in one, as his State is two States in one: his miserliness is a combination of puritanism with greed, and the two, if temporarily allied, are destined ultimately to quarrel.[1]

Division thus yawns wider in oligarchy: knowledge and justice recede further: lower elements of human nature come to the top. The gulf between the rich and the poor, and the struggle between conflicting appetites among the rich themselves, are elements of instability which make a revolution almost inevitable. Such a change might indeed be prevented if the rich were wise in their generation; and Plato suggests two methods for such prevention (556 A). One is the restriction of the use of property, that is to say, of the use of property as capital and of the lending of such capital on mortgage at usurious rates to the needy landowner. Another is the making of a rule that voluntary contracts, between the lender and the borrower of capital, should not be enforced by the State, but should be made at the lender's risk.[2] Neither method, however, is adopted. The Catilinarian class in the State, which regards itself as being defrauded of its property by the rich, increases unchecked. Class-consciousness and class-feeling develop. When the poor, weary and

[1] Plato's picture of the "oligarchic man," who combines a sort of moral puritanism (554 A) with a keen business instinct and dubious business methods (554 C), may remind us of the pictures drawn by enemy writers (and by some also of our own satirists) of English character to-day.

[2] Plato, in both proposals, is attacking capital and 'profiteering'; but where a modern socialist attacks capital which is used in production, and in order to hire 'wage-slaves' at an 'unjust' rate of remuneration, he attacks capital which is used for lending, at 'unjust' rates of interest. The second proposal is of dubious value: its effect would naturally be to raise the rate of interest. Both suggestions are notable from one point of view. They show Plato, for once, ready to consider the ways of preserving corrupt States, and regarding politics in the light in which they are treated by Aristotle in the sixth book of the *Politics*.

sunburnt, are drafted into the army side by side with the corpulent rich, and find their masters physically and, it may be, morally their inferiors, contempt is added to hatred. A slight occasion may precipitate the inevitable revolution : foreign help from a State of like principles with itself may be solicited by one or both of the 'two States' within the State ; but finally, after the poor have conquered their enemies, democracy comes into being, and inaugurates its regime of liberty and equality.

The Third Corruption—Democracy

The psychological basis of oligarchy, as we have seen, is appetite, but appetite in only one of its forms or phases, and with all its other forms in a rigorous subordination to the ruling passion for wealth. The basis of democracy is appetite in all its forms and phases, with liberty for each and not for one only, and with absolute equality for all. Drill and discipline—degrees and differences—now disappear. In place of drill, there is liberty for every one to order his own life for himself as he pleases, according to the appetite of the moment : in place of the degrees of a proper social hierarchy, based on and corresponding to the natural hierarchy of the elements of the mind, there is a universal equality, secured and sanctioned by the use of the lot in the appointment of all officials. Democracy is anarchy ; or, from another point of view, it is polyarchy. It is anarchy, because there is no one element dominant : it is polyarchy, because many elements are dominant together. It is like an embroidered robe, "spangled with all manner of characters" (ἤθη). In it there is no one type, but a multitude of types: there is no one constitution, adjusted to a single type, but a bazaar of constitutions, corresponding to a medley of types. Such is Plato's view of the constitution which Pericles had lauded in his funeral speech over the Athenians who had fallen in war, saying, "under the incentive of our constitution each of us can present himself to the community adequate, in his own resources, at one and the same time, for many activities, and that with a versatile capacity, and without failing in the graces of life".[1] This combination "of individual originality and manifold diversity," defended as much by Mill in modern times as by Pericles in his day, was to Plato only a phrase and a euphemism. What to Pericles was versatility was to him only instability ; and while he was alive to the variegated colour of Athenian life, he was no less alive to the absence of any scheme in all its colour. He can realise what has always been the argument of the great apostles of democracy—the energy it elicits ; the rich and multiform life it liberates ; the union of diverse elements which it postulates. But he is a votary of the One, and not of the Many : he believes in the unity of a common Idea, and not in the diversity of individuals—in one white radiance, and not in any dome of many-coloured glass. The issue between the value

[1] Thucydides, II. 40, § 1 ; *cf.* also II. 37.

of a social type and the value of individual variation is as much a living issue to-day as it was in the time of Plato. It may be that the antithesis is not absolute; that social type can be attained by a democratic State whose members are able to combine individual initiative with a common social mind and purpose; that differentiation and specialisation of faculty, which Plato himself held to be the necessary means for the attainment of such a type, can be most readily achieved in the form of State in which capacities can differentiate themselves most freely, and find their specific function most easily. In Plato's mind, however, the antithesis is fixed. Unity of type is impossible in a democracy. If oligarchy means two States in one, democracy means as many States within the State as there are individuals; for it means as many types of character, and as many corresponding polities or schemes of life. It is impossible, in Plato's view, to speak of any single or agreed rule of life in democracy. It contravenes entirely his fundamental conception of the State as a social type to which every member must be trained to conform by a process of education. Its principle is the absence of type, the absence of rule, the absence of social training. There is no necessity for you to govern, even if you have the faculty, or to be governed, unless you have the will: no necessity to go to war when others go to war, or to be at peace when others are at peace. Law is more honoured in the breach than the observance: social training is of no account: democracy never inquires if its statesmen are uneducated, and only asks whether they are friends of 'the people'.

It is obvious that what Plato describes under the name of democracy is what we should call by the name of anarchism—the anarchism of Shelley, in which man is

> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man:
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself.

But this is hardly what democracy meant in ancient Greece, or means to-day. Democracy means the government of a community by the common mind and will of that community expressed in a free and sovereign public opinion. Such government may, under some conditions, approach to anarchy; it may also, under other and more likely conditions, be the opposite of anarchy. It will be the opposite of anarchy, and will regulate individual life on many sides for the sake of a social ideal or type, if the common will is firmly set, and directed to all, or most, of the facets of social life. If, on the other hand, the common will is loosely strung and incoherent, and if it fails, or refuses, to direct itself to many of the issues of social life, it may abnegate government and espouse anarchy. Everything depends on the extent to which a social mind has been attained, a social ideal formed by that mind, and a social will

directed to the realisation of that ideal. If we look at the democracy of ancient Greece, there was, if we follow Pericles—perhaps a better guide than Plato to the ideals of the State he governed—a social type and a social will for its realisation in democratic Athens. If we look at the democracy of our own days, it is perhaps significant that its critics, following a line the opposite of Plato's, have noticed its tendency to promote uniformity of type, and to defeat, by the pressure of social opinion, that freedom of variation to which, in their view, aristocratic government is always more favourable.

Identifying democracy, as he practically does, with anarchy, Plato condemns its two cardinal principles of liberty and equality. They are not principles, he believes, but the negation of principles. Democratic equality is the negation of social order and social hierarchy; and meaning as it does equality for equals and unequals alike, it is also the negation of that true equality by which more is assigned to the more worthy, less to the less, and equality of proportion is observed for all.[1] Democratic liberty is the negation of social type and social training: it is the absence from social life of a principle of social conduct. Democracy itself, in virtue of both its principles, is the negation of justice: it is based on an absolute denial of the principle of specific function, and it shows its basis most clearly in its refusal to choose its leaders for any specific capacity. In a vivid picture of the "democratic man" Plato emphasises the defects of the constitution to which he corresponds. With something, it may be, of a reference to Alcibiades, he describes the democratic man as a chameleon, who makes into a principle the absence of principle, and turns inconsistency into a consistent habit. Motley, manifold, and an epitome of the lives of many, he is a mirror of the bazaar of constitutions in which he lives. His mind is an unstable equilibrium of all desires, now tilted one way and now another; athlete, politician, philosopher, soldier—he is "everything by turns, and nothing long". Like his State, he is "all liberty and equality"; and in order to establish liberty and equality among his appetites, he indulges all freely and gratifies each equally in turn. In this moral anarchy moral terms lose their connotation. One thing is as good as another, and it is foolish to call one thing bad or another thing good. Indeed, in the riotous days of his youth, before he settles down to the moral indifference of his maturity, the democratic man will even invert the use of moral terms: he will call insolence breeding, anarchy liberty, and waste magnificence.[2]

[1] True equality consists not in the assignation of equal amounts to unequals, but in the assignation of proportionately equal amounts. True equality, in other words, is the equality of two ratios—the ratio between A and what A receives, and the ratio between B and what B receives (*cf. Gorgias*, 508 A: *supra*, p. 139 n. 2).

[2] This is the passage (56: A; *cf.* 560 D) in which Plato apparently copies Thucydides (III. 82). Plato's whole description of the democratic man makes him much more attractive and interesting than the oligarchic. But he is put, none the less, on a lower level, because he has less *τάξις καὶ κόσμοs*—because, with all his charm, he is essentially unstable.

But there is a phase of democracy still to be considered—a phase in which democracy is sinking rapidly into the social and political chaos which produces tyranny (562 A-563 E). Just as oligarchy is ruined by excess of wealth, and perishes by its own principle, so democracy is ruined by the good which it pursues, and perishes of a surfeit of freedom. The final ruin is tyranny; but there is an intermediate stage of corruption, which may be called (though the term does not occur in Plato) by the name of extreme democracy. Here liberty ceases to be an unstable equilibrium, and becomes a mere chaos, alike in the State and the family, in the school and the street. In the State, all distinction between rulers and ruled is now abolished: subjects become like rulers and rulers like subjects. In the family, distinctions equally disappear: father and son, master and slave, husband and wife—all alike rise, or sink, to a level of uniform liberty. In the school, too, rule and subordination vanish: the master fears his scholars, and the scholars despise their master. Even the animals, Plato ironically adds, catch the prevailing contagion: order and regulation leave the streets, and the horse begins to drive the wayfarer from the road.[1] "Above all, and as the result of all, men cease to pay any heed to the laws, written or unwritten, in order that they may have no master of any sort."[2]

This is the social condition of extreme democracy; but its political condition is no less chaotic. We may distinguish three classes or parties in such a State. The first is that of the drones, or unemployed—men who, having no other occupation, become professional politicians, and buzz about public platforms. The second is the orderly, well-to-do middle class; and this is the natural prey of the first. The third is the masses, or working-class, which, when assembled, is the largest and most powerful of all, but needs some inducement or bribe if it is to assemble. The result of such a condition is inevitable. The first class proceeds to pillage the second for the benefit of the third, and, in still larger measure, of itself. Democracy thus becomes the government of a community by professional politicians, at the expense of the well-to-do, and in the interest primarily of themselves and incidentally of the masses. Such a government necessarily involves revolution. The middle classes seek to defend themselves; when they do so, they are accused of plotting against the sovereign people; and when they are thus accused, they begin to plot in reality. Seeing the people "not of their own accord" (Plato admits) "but through ignorance, and

[1] The author of the Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία, falsely ascribed to Xenophon, makes the same remark: "You may not strike a resident alien or a slave, nor will a slave make way for you in the street"; all dress alike, and no man can tell which is which.

[2] This passage (565 C) implies (1) a distinction between the form of democracy which pays some respect to law and that which pays none; and (2) a confession that, in actual states, law is better than the absence of law. In both respects the passage anticipates the teaching of the *Politicus* (*infra*, p. 285 *sq*.).

because they are deceived," seeking to do them wrong, they too, not of their own accord, but because they are compelled, become a revolutionary body. In the struggle that ensues a protector of the people (προστάτης τοῦ δήμου) takes the popular side.[1] The protector of the people is the plunderer of the middle class. Raising against them the cry of abolition of debts and redivision of the land,[2] and bringing all whom he can to their death by process of judicial murder, he provokes a civil war. In that war he is either expelled, only to return as a fully fledged tyrant, or he demands and receives a body-guard, and equally turns himself into a tyrant.

The verdict of the *Republic* on democracy is thus one of condemnation. In its life it is not lovely; and in its death it prepares the way for tyranny—the lowest and most degraded type of State. In his later dialogues—in the *Politicus*, and still more in the *Laws*—Plato's view undergoes a change. In the *Politicus*, for instance, he definitely distinguishes between two forms of democracy, the better or law-abiding and the worse or lawless form; and though he reckons both as inferior to aristocracy (which corresponds to the timocracy of the *Republic*), he regards both as superior to oligarchy. In the *Republic* the distinction between ordinary and extreme democracy is not very clearly drawn: in neither form will Plato allow that there is any rule of life or any respect for law; and he holds both to be inferior to oligarchy. Yet the verdict of the *Republic* is as much one of pity as of condemnation. It is an error to regard Plato as in actual life an aristocrat and an enemy of Athenian democracy:[3] it is equally an error to regard him as in theory the absolute enemy of popular government. He hates the demagogue rather than the Demos. "O my friend," he writes in one passage (499 D), "do not blame the people." If they sin, it is in ignorance and through deception. In a fine passage in the sixth book of the *Republic* (488 A-E), in which he uses the old figure of the ship of State which Alcaeus had used before in a famous lyric, Plato compares the people to the captain of a vessel besieged by rival claimants for the helm. The captain is taller and stronger than any of his crew, but he is deaf and short-sighted, and ignorant of things nautical. He is a noble fellow at bottom, but he is ruined by his infirmities. Drugged with opiates by his unruly crew, he is imprisoned in his cabin; and the would-be helmsmen seize the helm, pleading that statesmanship need not be learned, and anyhow cannot be taught.

[1] On the position of the προστάτης τοῦ δήμου in the actual history of Athens see above, p. 36.

[2] The oath of the judges at Athens contained a clause that they would never vote for these things. The meaning of the programme was (1) the cancelling of debts contracted on the security of land in favour of those whose land was mortgaged, and (2) a redivision of landed property in favour of those who had lost their estates through the foreclosing of mortgages.

[3] *Supra*, p. 109.

The Last Corruption—Tyranny

It is thus weakness, and not wickedness, which is the mark of democracy; but it is wickedness, and not weakness, which is the mark of the tyranny which it makes possible. In treating of tyranny Plato has in mind the history of Syracuse and the government of Dionysius I. Alike in his account of the genesis of tyranny from extreme democracy, and in his sketch of the tyrant's mode of government, he follows the lines of Syracusan history. In the first scene the tyrant is like the young lion-cub in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, "smiling on the hand that feeds him, and fawning for need of support". This is that stage of tyranny which appeared in the early years of Dionysius I, as it appeared again under the early Principate at Rome. When he is a little firmer in his seat, the tyrant pursues a policy of war, which will both make his guidance necessary, and distract the attention of his people from the position of internal affairs. Hence the wars of Dionysius against the Carthaginians; hence, in modern times, the war-policy of Napoleon III. When his old associates, who have aided his rise to power, begin to criticise his government, the tyrant is compelled to remove them from his path; and eventually, in his fear of such criticism, he must rid the State of every element of courage, magnanimity and discretion. Isolated from good, the tyrant is finally compelled to consort with evil. He hires mercenaries from every quarter, and even enrols slaves in his household guard; and to maintain his associates he is driven to secularise religious property, to confiscate the estates of the wealthy, and even, turning as it were parricide, to oppress the people that begat him.

The psychological basis of tyranny is still, like that of oligarchy and that of democracy, the appetite. But it is not, as in oligarchy, the single appetite of acquisitiveness; nor yet, as in democracy, an equilibrium of all appetites; it is brutal and lawless appetite—the lust of the flesh and the pride of power—which man has in common with the beasts. Appetite of this kind, when it is once engendered, is the tyrant of all the other appetites; and every passion is henceforth made to serve the purposes of a lust for self-gratification and self-assertion. This is the type of character which, when the opportunity for its full expansion into tyranny is denied, becomes the 'rapacious and licentious soldiery' of a mercenary army, or goes to form the criminal classes of society. It is a type which cannot unite with others freely and in friendship: it may be master, or it may be servant, but it is not made for equality. It is not the stuff from which any social fabric can be wrought: it is *exlex* and ἄπολις. It is absolutely unjust. Justice means the discharge of function in a common scheme; and such a type denies by its life, and cannot in its nature join, any kind of common scheme.

The Final Verdict on Justice and Injustice

Here the argument of the *Republic* has come round full circle;[1] and at the end of the revolution we stand once more face to face with the principle enunciated by Thrasymachus—the principle of brute self-assertion. But it is now possible to judge the value of that principle as it could not be judged before. We have seen in its fulness the opposite principle of self-subordination to a scheme and discharge of specific function in that scheme: we have seen, too, the intermediate stages which lie between the two opposing principles. It remains to judge the principle of brute self-assertion in the light of all this knowledge, and to answer the original question, from which the whole argument took its departure, whether the happiness of the perfectly just is greater than that of the perfectly unjust.

In describing tyranny, which is the perfectly unjust State, Plato indicates in advance what he ironically calls the bliss of the tyrant, who is isolated from the company of the good and condemned to the society of the bad.[2] In the ninth book of the *Republic* he seeks, by a triple line of argument, to establish the conclusion which he has thus suggested, and to prove the perfect happiness of the just and the perfect misery of the unjust. The first line of argument may be called the political (576 B-580 C). The State is only the individual writ large; and we may therefore argue from the happiness of States to the happiness of the individuals who correspond to those States. The ideal State is perfectly just and perfectly happy; and therefore the ideal man, who corresponds to and is a citizen of such a State, is perfectly just and perfectly happy. Such, at any rate, is Plato's assumption. As a matter of fact, however, it is not easy to arrive at any certainty about the happiness which is enjoyed by the citizens of the ideal State. Plato himself only discusses the happiness of the full citizens who are rulers or warriors; and he finds it difficult to prove that they are as happy as they are just. In two passages, it is true, he seeks to prove their perfect happiness. In one of these, at the beginning of Book IV (419-421 C), he concludes that the root of the matter is the happiness of the State as a whole; and he holds that, if this be so, the guardians and auxiliaries must be compelled or induced to make their specific contributions to that general happiness (*cf.* 519 E-520 A). This would hardly seem to prove the identity

[1] Whether the wheel of constitutional change also comes full circle, and tyranny passes into the ideal State, so that a new cycle can begin, is a question Plato does not raise or answer. But it seems to be implied, both in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, that this is the case. When, in the *Republic*, Plato talks of kings, or the sons of kings and princes, becoming philosophers, he seems to be thinking of a change from tyranny to the ideal State (499 B). Similarly in the *Laws*, a "young tyrant" is suggested as the best ground for reformation (709 E).

[2] *Cf.* the *Laws*, 728 B: "the greatest penalty of evil-doing is . . . to grow into the likeness of bad men, and growing like them to fly from the conversation of the good and be cut off from them, and cleave to and follow after the company of the bad".

of justice and happiness. In another passage, in which he is concerned with the benefits of communism (465 C-466 C), he argues that the first two classes, rid as they are of the cares of property and the family, will be happier than the victors in the Olympic games. Here he seems to concede that the guardians possess happiness in themselves. But he adds that if any of the guardians should seek to be happy in such a manner that he ceases to be a guardian, he must be taught that the half is better than the whole; and he thus implies once more that happiness "in the manner of a guardian" consists less in the happiness of the guardian himself than in his contribution to the general happiness. Here again, therefore, the justice of the guardian does not necessarily result in his happiness. When we turn to the opposite end of the scale, and consider tyranny and "the tyrannical man," there seems less difficulty in Plato's argument. Here he can place himself on the ground of fact. He can speak of tyranny to Greeks who knew and hated tyranny; he can speak of the tyrannical nature as one who, at Syracuse, had seen it face to face. All men know tyrannies to be the most miserable of States; and those who know tyrants know them to be the most miserable of men. At one end of the scale, therefore, Plato sets the happiness of the just man, who is just by reason of his service in a community which is based on reciprocal contributions of function: at the other he places the misery of the unjust man, who by his nature is incapable of sharing in any community. Fellowship, he concludes, is heaven, and the lack of fellowship is hell; and between them the deepest of gulfs is set.[1]

On the political argument there naturally follows the psychological (580 D-583 B). Different States are based on different elements of mind; and after comparing States we may therefore compare the different elements on which they are based. The three great elements of mind—reason, spirit, and appetite—have each their pleasure and each their corresponding happiness.[2] To the highest of these elements, which is reason, belongs the highest happiness; to the lowest of these elements, which is appetite, and especially to the lowest form of that element, which is lust for power and self-gratification, belongs the deepest misery. Here the question arises of the possibility of

[1] The fundamental consideration implied in this section of the argument is that happiness lies in proper discharge of function, and that the man who discharges the function of 'living' well will also 'live happily' (*cf. Republic*, 353 D-354 A, and *supra*, p. 158). The difficulty is that living well and living happily are not necessarily identical, even if we interpret happiness as something different from mere pleasure—unless, indeed, as Plato ultimately does, we take into account the immortality of the soul and its relation to God.

[2] Pleasure, or pleasurable sensation (= ἡδονή) must be distinguished from happiness, or more exactly blessedness (= εὐδαιμονία). Pleasure is the *summum bonum* of the many (505 B); but Plato himself is a "eudæmonist" rather than a hedonist. The good is not pleasurable sensation, but the "bliss of inward happiness" which comes from a right order of the soul. Pleasurable cognition, rather than pleasurable sensation, is its essence; and this is so because reason is uppermost in such a right order. . . . But it remains true that pleasure is part of Plato's conception of human happiness,

any measurement and comparison of the different kinds of happiness which belong to the different elements of mind. Plato meets the question with the answer that the rational man has experienced, and can judge, the pleasures of spirit and appetite as well as those of reason, and is therefore entitled to belief if he declares, as he does, that the pleasures of reason are the greatest. But the answer hardly meets the question. The measurement of different kinds of pleasure, on any scale of degree, involves the application of the category of quantity to a question of quality. It is one thing to say that one kind of pleasure is better in quality than another, and the moral sense may make that judgment: it is another thing to say that one kind of pleasure is more pleasurable in amount than another, and such a judgment can hardly be made. In any case the man of reason, to whom rational pleasures are most attractive, is judging in his own case, according to his own tastes ; and he is likely to be met by the counter-judgment of the man of spirit, who finds more pleasure in martial action than in contemplation of time and existence.

It is natural that Plato, holding as he does that different States are based on different elements of mind, should thus pass from the political argument to the psychological: it is equally natural that he should pass again from the psychological to a third line of argument, the metaphysical (583 B-587 B). Pleasure, he holds, is something positive: it is not an escape or relief from pain, though men often call such relief by the name of pleasure: it is a state of fulfilment, in which something is added to the soul. This in itself is already an argument against the pleasures of sense, which are rather means of release from pain than positive states of fulfilment. That, however, is still a matter of psychology; and the real point of metaphysics arises when we turn to consider the nature of the things we enjoy in the different pleasures of the different elements of the soul. The more real and true they are, the more real and true is the state of fulfilment which their addition brings. What is added to reason, when rational pleasure is felt, is real and true knowledge of real and true being: what is added to appetite, when the pleasures of appetite are experienced, is merely sensation, which, as such, is concerned with the unreal and unstable world of sense. Here again a question may arise, whether the pleasure which ensues on a state of satisfaction derived from things possessing metaphysical reality is greater in amount than that which ensues on a state of satisfaction derived from things possessing no such reality. Plato at any rate assumes that it is; and armed with this assumption he even seeks to calculate mathematically the difference of degree between the happiness of the just and the unhappiness of the unjust. With something of a Pythagorean turn—half in jest, and yet more perhaps in earnest—he concludes that the ruler of the ideal State lives seven hundred and twenty-nine times more pleasantly than the tyrant, and the tyrant more painfully than he by the same interval (587 E).

This is the final answer to the question raised in the beginning of the *Republic*, whether the unjust man, in himself and in the recesses of his own soul, apart from rewards or punishments, either in this world or the world to come, is less happy than the just. In the second part of Book X, taking a higher flight, and considering justice and injustice *sub specie æternitatis*, Plato speaks of the immortality of the soul, and the immortal garlands it may win if it cleaves to justice and never leaves her company. But the tenth book is a noble addition; and the central theme of the *Republic* is the happiness of justice in itself and apart from the world to come. Is it possible to sustain such a theme? Can the bliss of inward happiness go hand in hand with righteousness, unless faith in an everlasting God, and an everlasting soul, and His everlasting mercy on that soul, has knit the two together? We may seek to base righteousness on the foundation of social duty, saying "It is for the sake of the brethren," and so saying we may embrace a life of austere self-sacrifice, happy, after a Stoic fashion, simply to do what we conceive to be our duty. But the foundation will not permanently hold. There are some things which righteousness demands of us that are not demanded by social duty; and even in the sphere of its own demands the call of social duty may be ineffective, because happiness and satisfaction fail to follow the following of that call. Only if we base righteousness on religious faith can we find a foundation broad enough for its demands: only in the love of God can we find a perpetual fountain at once of righteousness and of happiness.

Like the writers of Israel (whose very language, as he neared the end of his life, and wrote the tenth book of the *Laws*, he seems to echo) Plato found himself face to face with the problem of the relation of righteousness to happiness—the problem of Job; the problem of the Psalmist. Like the writers of Israel, he turned at last to the name of God. At the end of the *Republic*, in the great myth of Er, he appeals to eternity for a solution. This life is an episode in an immortal drama, and if in this life only we seem to be in misery, though we are just, God is not mocked, for eternity corrects the conception of an hour. The same thought recurs in the *Laws*. In the second book of the *Laws* Plato raises again the question of the *Republic*. Is not the justest life also the pleasantest; is not the unjust life painful and to the disadvantage of him who lives it (662 A-D)? It is clear at any rate, he answers, that that is the view to be followed and enforced by the legislator, if men are to live holy and just lives; for men follow pleasure, and they will not follow justice unless they believe it to be pleasant (663 B). The opposite view is that of the worse souls, and for that reason it is a worse and an untrue view; but even if it were true, and even if the other view were untrue, a legislator who wished men to do justice voluntarily, and not under compulsion, could not invent a more useful

lie (663 D-E). Here the note is one of doubt; but by the end of the *Laws* it has turned to certainty. God is, and He is just. All the world is a scheme under His hands. To fulfil the duty of the place He has allotted us in His scheme is justice; and the way of justice, in the working of His eternal providence, is the way of happiness. "He who watches over the universe has made all things work together for the salvation and the excellence of the whole; and every part therein, according to its faculty, acts and is acted upon as it is meet that it should. . . . And one of the parts therein is thine; and though it be the least of all things, it looks to and labours duly in the universe. But this very thing hast thou forgotten, that all which happens happens for the sake of the universe, in order that the being of its life may be happy; nor does anything happen because of thee, but thou art because of the universe. Every physician and every cunning craftsman does all his work for the sake of the whole, and labours duly in bringing to pass what is best therefor; he makes the part for the whole, and not the whole for the part. But thou art grieved in thy ignorance, because thou knowest not in what manner the thing that is best for thee cometh to pass, both to the universe and to thee, as far as it may be in the happenings of the whole. . . .[1] Boy and stripling, that thinkest thyself neglected by God, know that, if thou art evil, thy portion shall be with the evil, and if thou art good, thy portion shall be with the good. . . . And neither thou nor any other shall ever boast yourselves to be above God, escaping His justice . . . for it shall never neglect thee. Thou canst not make thyself so small, or sink so far in the depths of the earth; thou canst not make thyself so high, or ascend so far into heaven, but thou shalt pay the fitting penalty, either here or in the world to come. . . . And on this wise also shalt thou think of those, whom thou didst see exalted high from a low degree through deeds of unholiness. Thou didst say 'Lo, they have been miserable, and now they are happy'; and in their deeds thou didst think to see, as in a glass, God's neglect of all things. But this thou knewest not, how all things work together, and each beareth its part in the universe."[2]

Plato and Panhellenism

Something has been said already of the Panhellenic feeling of the fourth century, more especially as represented by Isocrates, and of

[1] *Laws*, x. 903 B-D.

[2] *Ibid.*, 904 E-905. "It should be observed," writes C. Ritter of the whole of this passage (903 B-905 D), in his commentary on the *Laws*, p. 310, "that no exposition is to be expected which satisfies the strict demand of scientific proof: the passage is meant to contain μύθοι ἐπῳδοί." Plato is offering to a young man, who doubts the providence of God, a myth or story to charm him into belief. But Plato says deep things in myth; and this passage is hardly, even in form, a myth, but a creed and symbol.

Plato's sympathy with that feeling.[1] The end of the fifth book of the *Republic* bears evidence, in a striking way, to the depth of his conviction. The structure of his ideal State once completed, and the novelties of its internal structure once explained and justified, Plato turns to the question of its foreign relations. Writing perhaps under the influence of the feelings engendered by the Spartan campaigns against Persia (400-394),[2] he advocates a foreign policy of alliance, or at any rate amity, among the States of Greece, in opposition to 'barbarians'. The part of the *Republic* in which this argument is developed is perhaps the most definitely and consciously practical part of Plato's political theory. He does not go so far as Isocrates, or argue that the true cure for the internal troubles of the Greek States is to be found in their union in a crusade against the Great King—he had too clear a sense of the radical internal reform which they needed before they could really rest from their troubles—but he insists on the need for a general comity of Greece: he emphasises the idea of a common public law which regulates, or should regulate, the relations of the Greek States; and if he does not preach a crusade against Persia, he lays stress on the fundamental distinction between the Greek and all other peoples, and he draws from that distinction the moral that the Greeks must behave towards one another with a restraint which they need not show to the outer world.

The permanent interest of Plato's argument lies in the light which it throws on his ideas of international law and international morality. Though he may make the State absolute within, Plato is far from thinking that it is absolute, or free from limitation, in its external life. He has not, indeed, any notion of a universal brotherhood, or common human society, within which the State is contained, and by which its action is conditioned. Such an idea was impossible before the world-empires of Macedon and of Rome had done their work, and before thought, accommodating itself to these facts, had attained the conceptions, which appear first in Stoic philosophy and then in Christianity, of the brotherhood and equality of all men. Plato does not transcend the distinction still current in his day between the Greek and the barbarian; and the only brotherhood he recognises is limited to the Greek world. But he has a clear conception that the Greek world, at any rate, is a single society, with a civility or comity of its own, to which all its members are bound to conform. Within this society peace should rule; or, if there is war, war should be waged according to humane rules. Within this society, again, there should be a general recognition of the right of personal liberty; and Greek

[1] *Cf. supra*, pp. 69, 103-5, 113, 116.

[2] The Spartan campaigns, especially as waged by Agesilaus, had something of the character of a crusade. Agesilaus had attempted to sacrifice at Aulis, in the manner of Agamemnon, before setting sail for Asia Minor; and the memory was thus renewed of the old partnership of Hellas against Troy.

should never be the slave of Greek. Plato believes, in a word, that there is a public law of Greece, and that all Greek States are bound by this law.

Early in Greek history the Amphictyonic Council had represented, in a somewhat shadowy way, the conception of a public law of Greece. The Council had grown out of a local union round Thermopylæ, which seems to have attempted to secure law and order on the great route that ran through the pass. In time it developed into a league in which much, though not all, of the Greek world was represented; and it found a new home at Delphi, the religious centre of Greece. To a great extent the league was local, and concerned with the Delphic oracle; nor, except in the early sixth century, and again in the middle of the fourth century (many years, however, after the composition of the *Republic*), did it ever show any great activity. But it laid down certain rules for its members, and one of these has often been quoted—that no member of the league should ever destroy an Amphictyonic city or cut any such city off from running water.[1] A more real sense and a more active expression of Greek unity had appeared, for a time, during the wars between the Greeks and the Persians in the first twenty years of the fifth century. Herodotus makes the Athenians say, a little before the battle of Platæa (479), that "there was nowhere in the world so much gold, or land so excellent in beauty or worth, as would induce them to be willing to join the side of Persia and to enslave Greece, for that would be treachery to the Greek nation (τὸ Ἑλληνικόν), which had one Blood, one Speech, one Religion, and one Culture".[2] In the struggles of the later fifth century, however, such feelings lost their sway; the Greek world was torn both by the war of Sparta and Athens, and by internal feuds in its various States. There were always, however, some who clung to the old faith. Cimon at Athens, who could plead that Hellas would become halt and maimed if Spartan strength were paralysed, was of this school; and Callicratidas the Spartan, who vowed, when Methymna was taken by storm in 406, that while he held office no Greek should ever be enslaved if he could prevent it,[3] was of the same company. The end of the Peloponnesian War, and the outbreak of hostilities between Sparta and Persia, may have given new strength to this way of thinking; and both Isocrates and Plato, in their different ways, continue the tradition of Cimon and Callicratidas.

Plato's teaching in the *Republic* touches partly the enslavement of Greeks, and partly the rules of war among Greeks. Greek cities, he holds, should never enslave Greeks, or allow any other to do so, and this for fear of falling into slavery themselves at the hands of

[1] Æschines, *de Falsa Leg.*, c. 35.
[2] Hdt., VIII. 144: *cf. supra*, p. 20.
[3] Xenophon, *Hell.*, I. 6, § 14.

the barbarians, if they waste the strength of their nation by depriving its members of liberty (469 B). Here Plato recognises the right of every member of the Greek world to liberty; and since every right connotes a society within which it is enjoyed and by which it is guaranteed, he may be said to recognise by implication the existence of a common Greek society.[1] The conception of such a society, and of the public law of such a society, appears still more definitely in the laws which he lays down for the regulation of war between Greek States. War between Greeks is really civil war, and not war proper. All Greeks are united, positively by ties of friendship and kinship, negatively by a common opposition and a common hostility to the barbarian world (470 B-C). When civil war rages in a State, the public opinion of the State condemns any severe rigour of hostilities, and expects the combatants so to wage war as not to make reconciliation impossible. The public opinion of Greece expects, or should expect, that hostilities between Greek States will be conducted on the same lines. Greeks should never ravage the territory of Greeks or burn their houses: they should confine themselves to seizing (as a measure of war and to shorten hostilities) the annual crop. Nor again should there be any plundering of the dead in the course of hostilities, or hindering of their burial, or making of a show of trophies in temples. War proper—war in its full rigour—must be waged by Greeks against barbarians, who are their "natural enemies".[2] Whether or no it is a duty of his ideal State to wage a war Plato does not say; but he is clear enough about the duty of his State towards other Greek States. It is a Greek city; and its citizens will be lovers of Greece, thinking of all other Greeks as their kinsfolk, and sharing with them in religious worship. If they fight other Greeks, it will not be by way of offensive war, or for the sake of conquest or destruction, but by way of punishment, in restraint of wrongdoing, and for the prevention of offences against the law of their nation. Nor will they ever hold all the citizens of an enemy State, men, women, and children, to be their enemies, or treat them

[1] Incidentally it may be noticed that it is dubious whether there is room for slavery of any sort in Plato's State. Adam remarks (in his note to 469 C) that slaves could only have been employed by the third class or in attendance on the common tables of the guardians. He adds (in his note to 465 C) that "where there is no οἰκία, as in Plato's city, there can be no οἰκέται. Plato's communism involves the abolition of domestic slavery as well as of family ties". (The οἰκία, however, would remain among the third class, and with it possibly slaves.)

[2] In the *Menexenus* (245) Plato, professing to report a speech of Aspasia, speaks of Athens as having preserved a pure hatred of the alien stock of barbarians, at a time when the other Greek States were weak-kneed, because the Athenians were themselves a pure stock and not half barbarian. A passage in the *Politicus* (262 D) breathes a different tone. Plato, concerned with the proper method of differentiation and division into species, takes the current distinction between Greek and barbarian as an instance of improper differentiation; but his main ground of objection to the current distinction is not that it makes a gulf between Greeks and barbarians, but that it confuses under a single appellation (βάρβαροι) a congeries of stocks who have no experience of one another, no mixture with one another, and no agreement with one another.

as if they were enemies; but, "knowing that the guilt of war is confined to a few persons, and acting as if the many were their friends," they will press their quarrel no further than the point at which the guilty are compelled by the guiltless, who suffer the consequences of their misdoings, to give due satisfaction (471 B).

The limitation of Plato's outlook, if an outlook can be called limited which was after all broader than that of most of his contemporaries, must not blind us to the fact that he stood, and that he is the first thinker who stood, for the rule of international law. Two thousand years before Grotius he is dealing with the problem of Grotius, and seeking to find a *jus belli.* He does not, like Grotius, seek to base such a law on a *jus naturæ*: he has no need to appeal to the law of nature, for he has a more concrete basis in the sentiment of nationality.. It is wrong, he feels, that units of the same nation, even if they are politically independent, should behave as if they were unrelated and unconnected. But he recognises, and would never have thought for an instant of refusing to recognise, their political independence. He does not contemplate any federation of Greece, or any common political authority of any kind. It is just for that reason, and because he recognises that the States of Greece are politically independent, that his insistence on the rule of law within a system of politically independent States entitles him to rank as a forerunner of international law.[1]

NOTE

In the *Timæus* and the *Critias* (two parts of a projected trilogy, of which the third part was never begun) Plato writes, as it were, an epilogue to the *Republic.* In the former dialogue there is a brief recapitulation of the *Republic,* and a promise to show the ideal State engaged in action: in the *Critias,* which is a fragment, a beginning of the fulfilment of the promise is made.

The recapitulation of the *Republic* at the beginning of the *Timæus* raises some difficulties. It extends as far as the first five books of the *Republic;* but it extends no further. Nothing is said of the perfect guardians (the classes mentioned are only two—those who farm or pursue other arts, and those who defend the State): nothing is said of the rule of philosophy: nothing is said of the higher education. The explanation of this omission is not easy. Some would argue that there were two versions of the *Republic*: that the first of these versions only contained

[1] Dr. Philippson, in his work on *The International Law and Custom of Ancient Greece and Rome* (pp. 36, 37), quotes from Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* (c. 17) a tradition which is interesting to-day. Pericles proposed that all Greek towns "should be invited to send representatives to a general assembly at Athens, to deliberate . . . on the best means of assuring to all freedom and security of navigation, and of establishing general peace". The proposal is said to have failed owing to Spartan jealousy of Athens and fear of an Athenian hegemony.

the first four books and part of the fifth (down to 471); and that Plato in the *Timæus* is only recapitulating the argument of this version. It has been suggested, again, that "if Plato took so much trouble to attach the *Timæus* to the *Republic*, he must have meant the later dialogue to supplement the earlier in some way," and that the omission "can only mean that the *Timæus* and its projected sequels were intended to replace in some way the later books of the *Republic*" (Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 339). It is perhaps the simplest of all views that Plato was simply guilty of giving an imperfect summary. Writing in later life, long after the composition of the *Republic*, he recapitulated its obvious and external features: he omitted the higher and more recondite matters. The omission becomes entirely natural when we reflect that the promise which leads to the recapitulation—the promise to show the State of the *Republic* engaged in action—was perhaps never seriously meant, and was certainly never fulfilled.

It is true that Socrates, in the beginning of the *Timæus* (19 B-E), is made to express the wish to see the sculptured State of the *Republic* emerging from its pedestal into life and action. Plato apparently wishes to justify the ideal State by its fruits; to show how its excellence would issue in great deeds, and, conversely, to prove by those great deeds the greatness of its excellence. But within a few pages the argument undergoes a sudden change. Plato proposes to shift the scene from the State of the *Republic* to ancient Athens (26 D); and when we come to the *Critias* we find, in effect, that it is ancient Athens—an entirely imaginary and prehistoric Athens—with which Plato is concerned. In the *Timæus* Plato glosses over the change: the citizens of the ideal State of the *Republic* will harmonise perfectly with the citizens of the golden age of Athens, and it is the same to speak of the one as it is to speak of the other. But the change of scene suggests, after all, that the precise scene hardly matters. Plato is about to write a romance, and any Arcady will serve his purpose.

The fragment of the *Critias* which survives is certainly pure romance; and it may remind the reader, in many ways, of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. The fragment contains a description, first of ancient Athens, "nine thousand years ago," and then of the ancient State of Atlantis, which Athens fought and overthrew. In describing Athens, Plato is mainly concerned with its social institutions, though he gives, incidentally, a remarkable account of the geology of ancient Attica: in describing Atlantis he deals, in the main, with its physical features. Athens, in those ancient days, had a system of specialised classes—husbandmen, artisans, and warriors (110 C): the warriors dwelt on the Acropolis, the artisans and some of the husbandmen on its slopes, and the rest of the husbandmen in the surrounding country. The warriors lived round the temples, in an enclosure like the garden of a house: their dwellings were simple and modest, and even the temples were unadorned with either gold or silver. Women as well as men belonged to the class of warriors, and lived on the Acropolis: military pursuits were common to both sexes, as the statue of the goddess Athena, clad in full armour, stood to testify.

The warriors were a class apart: they lived under a system of communism; and they received from the other citizens an allowance for their subsistence. The husbandmen were true husbandmen, and confined themselves to husbandry; but they were men of a noble nature who followed after honour. Such were the Athenians of those days, "about twenty thousand at the most," men renowned over Europe and Asia for beauty of body and every excellence of mind, and famous above all others of their times.

Atlantis was of a different type. It was a sort of primitive Babylon, a vast island, surrounded by alternate zones of sea and land. The walls were covered with brass, and with tin, and with orichalcum: there were marbles of red, and of white, and of black, and some of the buildings were built with one only, and some with all the three. There was a temple in the centre of the island, having an enclosure round about it of gold: it was a stadium in length, and half a stadium in width; and its height was according. It was savage and strange to look upon: it was covered outside with silver, but its pediment was of gold; the roof within was of ivory, and the walls and pillars and floor of orichalcum. The harbour of the city was full of ships and merchantmen from every end of the earth, with shouting and hubbub of every kind and a roar that went up by night and by day. There were 10,000 chariots and 1200 ships, and the land was divided into 60,000 lots: ten kings ruled over it, and they lived together in brotherliness.

With these two pictures the story ends. The action never begins. It is all romance, and it bequeathed to romance the great and romantic tradition of Atlantis. But, just for that reason, it would be hard to maintain that the *Critias* could ever have represented, or ever have been seriously intended to represent, the issuing into action of the austere philosophic ideal of the *Republic*.

Chapter XII

THE *POLITICUS*

THE *Politicus* (or "Statesman") probably belongs to the last period of Plato's life; and its composition may be assigned either to the period of his connection with Dionysius II (367-361) or to the years immediately following.[1] Whatever the exact date of its composition may have been (and that we can hardly hope to discover), the *Politicus* must in any case have been written many years after the publication of the *Republic*. Its attitude to democracy is less hostile; and above all a new attitude to law—still hostile, but much less uncompromisingly hostile—is one of its prominent features. On the other hand, a belief in absolutism is still part of Plato's thought; and though there is much discourse of weaving and the need for mixture of different mental elements in the composition of the State, there is only a very slight hint of that form of mixed constitution, combining monarchy with democracy, which is advocated in the *Laws*. The *Politicus* must thus be prior by some years to the *Laws*. Perhaps we shall not go far wrong if, remembering that between 367 and 361 Plato had high hopes of the monarchy at Syracuse, and that, on the other hand, he was already interested in law and working with Dionysius II at the construction of preambles for laws, we ascribe the *Politicus*, with its mixture of a vindication of absolutism and an appreciation of law, to the same period of his life.

The Definition of the Statesman or Absolute Ruler

The *Politicus* was intended by Plato to be a logical exercise in the art of definition by way of differentiation, rather than a political treatise.[2] The inquiry is more for the sake of improvement

[1] Grounds of style seem to suggest a late date for the dialogue; and its tone, which marks, as we shall see, a transition towards the last period of Plato's thought, which appears in the *Laws*, is consonant with its style (*cf.* Campbell's preface to his edition, pp. li *sqq.*). Nohle (*die Staatslehre Platos*, pp. 71-100) treats the *Politicus* as prior in time, and preparatory in argument, to the *Republic*; and this leads him to a line of interpretation which seems to me decidedly ingenious but entirely erroneous.

[2] The *Politicus* is part of a projected trilogy of dialogues—the *Sophist*, the *Statesman* (πολιτικός), and the *Philosopher*—dealing with the theory of human knowledge in an ascending scale. The *Sophist*, however, becomes in fact a treatise on Being and Not-Being: the *Statesman* turns into a treatise on differentiation; and the *Philosopher* never was written (*cf.* Campbell's introduction to his edition of the *Politicus*, pp. lvi-

of the general power of reasoning than for the sake of understanding the nature of the statesman (285 D). The statesman is only, as it were, the *corpus vile* of an essay in definition; but Plato's political ardour cannot but shine, as it does again and again, through the cloud of logical rules, and the dialogue, true after all to its name, becomes in the end a study of the real nature of the statesman in himself and for his own sake. The first stage in the argument is the assignation of statesmanship to its genus; and Plato begins by distinguishing knowledge from practice and assigning statesmanship or 'political science' to the sphere of knowledge (258 E-259 D). The assignation may appear at first sight paradoxical, especially in view of what has already been said (*supra*, pp. 9-11) of the practical character of political science among the Greeks. But Plato uses practice in a restricted sense, and with reference to arts and crafts; and he gives a wide scope to the sphere of knowledge, which (we have to remember) according to Socratic theory is closely connected with and inevitably results in action (*supra*, p. 91). The next step in the argument is the division of knowledge into two branches—the critical, which judges or calculates about the objects of pure knowledge; and the imperative, which not only judges but also issues commands for the execution of its judgments.[1] Statesmanship belongs to the latter branch: political science speaks in the imperative mood (259 D-260 B). The next step is to distinguish, within the imperative branch of knowledge, between the species which is supreme and that which is subordinate. Some who bear command are sovereign, without any superior, and their commands originate with themselves: others are under authority, and the commands which they issue are commands which have been issued to them. The statesman belongs to the former class; and his knowledge is not only a knowledge of command, but a knowledge of sovereign commands (260 B-E). This is an argument afterwards expanded in the course of the dialogue (303 D-305 E); and Plato, going into detail, shows how the statesman is superior to the orator, the general and the judge, inasmuch as, in his capacity of sovereign, he has to determine when, and for what objects, their powers shall be exercised. Statesmanship, in a word, is supreme over all the other sciences concerned with action: the statesman's knowledge, like himself, is kingly: political science, as Aristotle says at the beginning of the *Ethics*,[2] is architectonic. This is a

lviii). In the same way Plato projected a second trilogy—the *Timæus*, the *Critias*, and the *Hermocrates*—and in the same way he never began the composition of the third member of the trilogy.

[1] Aristotle's distinction of the practical and theoretical sciences is here suggested in advance (*cf.* also, on the references of Aristotle to the *Politicus*, pp. 273, 281 n. 3, 291 n. 1).

[2] *Cf. Ethics*, I. 2, §§ 4-6 (1093, a 27 *sqq.*—a passage which seemed modelled on the *Politicus*, 303 D-305 E): "Political science is manifestly most sovereign and architectonic, arranging as it does which of the other sciences should exist in States, and by whom and to what extent they should be learned, and controlling, as it obviously does, the functions which are held in highest honour, such as those of the general, the householder, and the orator" (*cf.* also *supra*, pp. 125-6).

lesson already enforced by Plato in the *Euthydemus* (*supra*, p. 125); but it is enforced once more, with a new wealth of illustration, by the argument of the *Politicus*.

The quality of the command which the statesman exercises has now been defined: it remains to define the aim of that command and the objects of its exercise. Briefly it is exercised for the purpose of sustentation, and what it seeks to sustain is living beings, or, more exactly, human beings, not, however, as individuals, but as united in herds or groups (261 A-E). The statesman is a shepherd set for the sustentation of a human flock. The word "sustentation" implies (and in the beginning of the dialogue it is definitely stated) that between the management of a household, or economic science, and that of a State, or political science, there is no cleavage. A large household and a small State differ only in degree, and not in kind (259 B); and the same is true of the sciences of their management. "There is one science of all of them; and this science may be called royal or political or economical." This view furnishes the starting point of the *Politics*; for Aristotle begins by traversing its truth, and by emphasising the distinction between the State and the household, and therefore between political and economic science. It also furnishes an argument for the doctrine of divine right to Sir Robert Filmer, who remarks in his *Patriarcha* that "the Divine Plato concludes a Commonwealth to be nothing else but a large Family," and argues that, since the father is divinely charged to rule the family, the king is therefore divinely charged to rule the commonwealth.

The Myth of the Politicus

With the definition of the statesman thus attained Plato is, however, dissatisfied. If we define a statesman as one possessed of knowledge, of the imperative order, with sovereign control, who exercises his knowledge for the sustentation of a human group, we are really giving a definition which is too wide—at any rate so far as the word "sustentation" is concerned—and we are thus failing adequately to differentiate the statesman from others who may also claim to be occupied with sustentation (267 E-268 C). At this point, and in order to elucidate this criticism of the definition, Plato introduces a myth. From this myth we learn to distinguish two stages of human society and government. The first is the age of Cronus, when the world was divinely ruled, and the burden of their affairs did not fall upon men, but they were as a flock led beside their pastures by a divine shepherd (271 D-272 A). In this age men were one family, and wives and children were common: earth gave her increase untilled, and under the clement skies, needing no clothes or shelter, men lay as they

were at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth

Then came the age in which we live, when God withdrew from the helm and retired to his conning-tower.[1] In this age men first of all fell into helplessness and misery; and for a while they were at the mercy even of the beasts,[2] until the gods took pity upon them, and Prometheus gave them fire, and Hephæstus and Athena the arts, and other gods seeds and plants. And thus equipped men were able to shoulder the burden of their own affairs, ordering for themselves their course of life, and ruling as masters over themselves (274 C-D).

The myth of the *Politicus* is in some respects like that of the *Protagoras*; but there is no mention in the former of the spiritual gifts which the gods are represented as making to men in the latter. The moral which Plato seeks to draw from the myth of the *Politicus* will not permit any mention of such endowment. For the moral is that a distinction must be drawn between the old days of the divine shepherd of the human flock, and the untended and unguided days of our present life in which *fare di se* must be our motto. Because there is this distinction, the old definition of the statesman will not suit our times. That definition really implied a divinity in the statesman which does not exist in the days of human rulers who stand on much the same level as their subjects (278 C). It implied, in its use of the word "sustentation," a larger scope of function than belongs to the modern statesman. We must distinguish between the divine shepherd and the human ruler: we must distinguish between sustentation and management, and limit the scope of the human ruler by confining his function to simple management of the society which he rules; and finally (remembering that our days are the days of mortal men, who in their nature are prone to error) we must distinguish between the statesman who is a true king, and exercises a rule to which submission is voluntary, and the statesman who is a tyrant, and, having gone astray, exercises a rule to which he can only secure submission by force (276 E).

The distinction between the age of Cronus, which is the age of the divine shepherd, and the age in which we live, which is that of human rulers, is curious and interesting. It has been suggested[3] that Plato is alluding to a Pythagorean view, which represented God as the shepherd of the world, and kings as the image of God. Such a view postulates theocracy, or, at any rate, a theory of the divine right of kings.[4] Plato pushes such a view, and such a

[1] The metaphor, according to Burnet (*op. cit.*, p. 290) is Pythagorean.

[2] *Cf.* the *Protagoras*, 322 B, and *supra*, pp. 62, 130.

[3] *Cf.* Campbell's edition of the *Politicus*, Introduction, xxi-xxvi, and Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 290. Campbell, however, remarks that the Pythagorean writers, in whose writings we find the idea of a *jure divino* monarchy, are all later than Plato, and may be copying Plato's theory of philosopher-kings rather than reproducing a native tradition of their own school.

[4] It is curious, in this connection, to note that Filmer, the upholder of the *jus divinum* of monarchy, cites the *Politicus*.

postulate, on one side. We cannot tell, he says, the value of a life lived under such guidance. Unburdened with the orb of their fate, men may have turned to high philosophy: unstimulated by responsibility for themselves, they may have lived a life of mere gossip (272 B-D).[1] At any rate we are concerned with things as they now are. We live after the fall (it is curious to notice in the *Politicus* the recurrence of this idea of the fall, which we have already noticed in the *Protagoras*); and Plato, like St. Augustine and the Christian Fathers generally, is ready to admit the relative validity of the institutions which belong, and are accommodated, to fallen humanity.[2] He may even intend to suggest, in his ironical way, that men rise in the scale of being after the fall, when they assume the burden of responsibility for the conduct of their lives.

The Final Definition of the Statesman or Absolute Ruler

The way of distinction and differentiation has not yet been trodden to its end. Even if we have corrected the definition of the statesman, by substituting management for sustentation as his function, and by adding the notion of voluntary obedience to his rule, we have not yet distinguished him from all who may claim to bear his title. Here Plato turns to the analogy of weaving, and seeks to distinguish the true statesman from false claimants to his title in the same way as one would distinguish the true weaver from all pretenders to his name and calling (279 A *sqq.*). It is important to notice that this analogy of weaving is not introduced at random. No other art would have suited so well the purpose for which Plato ultimately uses the analogy. The true statesman, as we shall see, resembles the genuine weaver in a peculiar way: like him, he has to join dissimilar natures in a uniform texture, and from the warp and the woof of human qualities he has to weave on the loom of time the living stuff of a single society. Meanwhile, however, Plato only uses the analogy in a general sense, in order to sift the gold of essential statesmanship from the other elements to which it seems akin. We need not follow him through the whole process of sifting, and we may turn at once to its final stage. The weaver has been compared with and separated from all rival claimants to his style and title, and (after a number of lesser claimants have been cleared away) the statesman is similarly confronted with and distinguished from the arch-pretenders to his name. These are, in a word, the class of politicians. In a dramatic passage (291 A-B) Plato professes to be

[1] The passage in the *Politicus* suggests a parallel passage in the *Republic* (372 A-D), and another in the *Laws* (678 E-679 E).

[2] The conception of the "fall" is as it were a bridge, by which Plato passes over from his old advocacy of the ideal of communism and philosopher-kings (now relegated to the times before the fall) to a new phase of theory in which he admits the value of actual institutions for actual "fallen" men. The Christian conception of the fall certainly served as a bridge to the Christian Fathers, by which they passed over from an advocacy of common property as a natural institution to an admission of the value of private property as a remedy for the sin entailed by the fall (*cf. infra*, p. 38).

bewildered by the sudden entry of a riotous rout of Centaurs and Satyrs—Protean shapes, "quickly changing into one another's forms and natures," as men must who have never learned to know and practise each his proper function; "prime Sophists and most accomplished of wizards," who pretend (like the Sophists) to a sham knowledge, and conjure man into a belief in its reality. These are the "kings" elected by lot; and these we have to distinguish from the king by genuine appointment.

In making such a distinction, Plato begins by a brief and provisional classification of constitutions. The criterion of number suggests three constitutions, according as the one, the few, or the many are in power; and if we add three other criteria—the presence of wealth or poverty; the presence or absence of law; and the basis of force or consent—we may subdivide each of the first two into two different species, in the one case royalty and tyranny, in the other aristocracy and oligarchy (291 D-E).[1] But these criteria, Plato argues, have nothing to do with the nature of the State or of statesmanship. The number of the rulers, their wealth or poverty, their use of force or persuasion, their ruling by law or without law—none of these are distinguishing principles of the State; and no man can be distinguished as a true statesman because he satisfies any of these principles. To satisfy one or other of these principles, all of which are partial, is only to qualify for the name of partisan[2] (303 C). A State based merely on one of these principles is only a shadow of the true State; and its statesman is only the premier (προστάτης) of a shadow, and a shadow himself. Statesmanship is knowledge, and knowledge only: the only true form of government is that where the rulers possess knowledge (293 B); and the only true State is that which possesses such rulers. A State, in other words, cannot be a political society (it can be no more than a faction), unless it coheres as a unity through the co-ordinating power of a statesmanship based on knowledge. Such knowledge can only be attained by one, or at most a very few: the multitude cannot attain political science (292 B); and the only true statesmen are the elect few who possess that science.

Absolutism Justified by the Argument of Political Flexibility

What then shall we say of law, or of consent, as principles of politics and elements in the life of the State? Both, Plato answers, are irrelevant and unnecessary; and law is even more—it is detrimental. Statesmanship is essentially science of the imperative order

[1] It is apparently the last two criteria by which this subdivision is made. (Democracy, it should be noted, is not subdivided in this preliminary classification: 292 A.) The criterion of wealth and poverty presumably aids that of number in distinguishing the rule of the few from that of the many.

[2] Plato is alluding to his doctrine of the 'two States' within the State, which he held to be true of all States except the State of perfect knowledge.

vested with sovereign control. It is an art, and it is the essence of every art that the artist works by himself as a monarch (though artists other than the statesman are not sovereign, and exercise their art under his control), and that he is free from any code of rules determining the methods of his work.[1] He is free to make the best of the object on which he works according to his knowledge; and the statesman, as an artist, is free to do good to his subjects according to his knowledge (293 C). It follows, first of all, that he stands in no need of the consent of his subjects. The passenger and the patient have no right to give any preliminary consent to the exercise of the art of the pilot or physician. Both, on the contrary, give themselves over to the guidance of knowledge without any claim to a voice in the methods in which it is to be exercised. It is a matter of acquiescence rather than consent; and if physician and pilot know their arts, they will necessarily do good to patient and passenger, and necessarily secure acquiescence.[2] The same is true of the statesman. It is a plausible saying that he must first persuade the State of any improvement; but it is only plausible (296 A). A citizen who is compelled to do what is juster and better and nobler than what he did before has received benefit and not detriment; and any man, whether with the goodwill of the citizens or against their will, may do what is for their benefit (296 D-E). These, it is obvious, are the principles of enlightened despotism, which had their vogue in the eighteenth century, when "all for the people and nothing by the people" was the motto of statesmanship; and they are principles which have their defects. The analogy of the pilot does not really prove the point which it is intended to prove. He may not be responsible to the passengers, but he is responsible to ship-owners and the Board of Trade. It is a rule of life that where power resides, there responsibility must reside also; and the statesman is not exempt from this rule. If, again, we take the analogy of the physician, we have to remember that the patient voluntarily entrusts himself to his care, and may accept or reject his advice; and if we press the analogy, we shall conclude that subjects may voluntarily entrust themselves to their rulers by a form of election, and may accept or reject the proposals which they suggest. It is true that the patient is free to go or not to go to a doctor, while the subject is not free to belong or not to belong to a State: it is true that in the one case we are concerned with individuals, and in the other with a society. But it does not follow that because the citizen is bound to his State he is therefore bound to a statesman, or that

[1] The days of the Trade Union, with its ideal of the Common Rule, had not dawned in Greece. There was not even any formal guild-organisation (*supra*, p. 236), though there were voluntary associations of workers with a common cult. Otherwise Plato might have doubted whether the analogy of the 'arts' really supported the cause of absolutism.

[2] It is assumed here, as in the earlier books of the *Republic* (*supra*, p. 157) that the object of every artist is not his own benefit, but the benefit of the object of his art,

because we belong willy-nilly to a State we must bow willy-nilly to a form of government. Any art which handles human beings is subject to responsibility and depends on consent. But it is the less necessary to press such criticisms, since Plato, as we shall see, modifies his own position in the course of the dialogue.[1]

The second corollary drawn by Plato from his conception of the true statesman as an artist is that law is unnecessary and even prejudicial to his art. The point of view is somewhat different from that of the *Republic.* There it was argued that when education has given a living knowledge, law has become unnecessary, and that an abundance of laws is therefore only a sign of ignorance and lack of education. When the citizen becomes a law to himself, State-made law is supererogatory: quid leges *cum* moribus vanæ proficiunt? In the *Politicus* law is still regarded as an evil, but more on the ground that it means the imposition of checks and hindrances on the free play of the ruler's knowledge, and less on the ground that it indicates the presence of ignorance in the whole of the State. The argument now advanced against law is that in its generality it neglects the differences of persons and cases, and in its permanence it fails to meet the differences of times. "The differences of men and actions, and the endless irregular movements of human things, do not admit of any universal and simple rule. And no art whatsoever can lay down a rule which will last for all time" (294 B). Law, with its stiff and permanent rules, is like an obstinate and ignorant tyrant, who will never alter his mind. It is as if a physician were to limit himself to doctoring by the book, and paid no heed to the peculiar complexion of the constitution, or the changes in the progress of the disease, which he was treating. Laws, it is true, exist, and they exist very generally, in spite of their imperfections; but the reasons are simple. Legislators abnegate the difficult task of using their free intelligence to cope with the differences of men and of actions; and like a trainer of athletes who saves himself trouble by laying down a uniform diet to suit the majority, they enact general rules for the mass which can only suit individual cases roughly. They know, again, that they themselves cannot live for ever, and thinking of the times to come, and the rules they will need, they lay down principles for a future they will not be present to control, though, if they could come again and see for themselves the new times and seasons, they would be the first to suggest the necessary changes. The existence of law is thus

[1] A difficulty arises in regard to Plato's attitude towards the need of consent. In 276 D-E he has distinguished the statesman from the tyrant on the ground that he is concerned with the voluntary management of a society. In 293 D-E, and still more in 296 A-E, he seems to eliminate the necessity of consent. We may perhaps meet the difficulty by saying that Plato believes (1) in the need of acquiescence but not of consent, and (2) that acquiescence will always exist under the true statesman. Such acquiescence is implicit consent: the consent of which Plato denies the need is explicit consent. But it would appear that the problem of the part played by consent in the scheme of political obligation is not clearly present to Plato.

explicable on practical grounds; but ideally the variability of matter and the flux of time both demand a corresponding flexibility in the powers of the statesman, and States which bind their rulers to act according to law are deprived of that flexibility.

Flexibility, it may be rejoined, is a good thing; but security is also a good thing, and perhaps a better thing. Unless human life is to be incalculable and unstable, men living in a community must know in advance the rules by which they are to act, and by which they may expect other men to act; and they cannot have this knowledge unless there are laws which have been announced in advance and possess a large measure of permanence. Bentham counted security chief among the articles of happiness; it was the pre-eminent object, the grand principle, the foundation of life, on which everything else depended.[1] We must not bind the future with too many chains in advance, but yet the future must be something calculable; and the legitimate expectation of the existing generation must somehow be reconciled with the freedom of the next to control its destinies. Plato was perhaps too much afraid of the rigidity of law. We have, indeed, to remember the character of the law of which he was thinking. Greek law was a formed body of precepts rather than a living growth; Greek States valued the law-abiding instinct (εὐνομία) which came from adherence to a fixed code, and they were afraid of any innovation. Even at Athens law was difficult to change: the Athenian Assembly was by no means a legislative body; and legislative change required special methods and precautions. Content with a few written laws and a body of unwritten custom, which they regarded as equally binding, the Greeks faced the protean demands of the present and the new possibilities of the future with a small and static accumulation of rules. To-day law is far more of a progressive development which keeps pace with the growth of public opinion: it is far more detailed, and runs into far greater particularity of application to persons and cases. Possessed as we are of an active legislature, such as even Athens never knew, and of a judicial bench which can modify law to suit new cases even while it seems to preserve the ancient rule (a power which the popular courts of Athens could hardly have exercised), we can hardly appreciate Plato's position. Yet in the absence of forces such as these it was possible that law might be rigid in the two ways which Plato indicates, and that injustice might be the result; and to that extent his contention has its truth. On the other hand we may gather from Aristotle's criticism that there did exist in equity (ἐπιείκεια) a force which could modify law, to suit a particular need or a change of circumstance, without any overt contravention of its form; and there is a deep truth in Aristotle's further criticism that to abolish law because it is rigid may only open the door for the

[1] *Theory of Legislation*: the Principles of the Civil Code, I, c. II, and c. XI.

tyranny of a government which may only too easily use its 'flexible' powers for interests of its own. Without a common rule of law, government may too readily become a respecter of persons; and the cause of uniformity of application, as well as that of security of expectation, must tilt the beam against the plea of flexibility.

The antithesis drawn by Plato between the personal rule of a wise sovereign and the impersonal rule of law raises a question, often discussed among the Greeks, which Aristotle afterwards considered at the end of the third book of the *Politics*, on much the same lines, and with much the same reference to the analogy of medicine, but with a bias which on the whole is the opposite of that of Plato. This is the question whether politics should be conceived as an art, and the State as the sphere of free artistic creation, or whether it should be regarded as a matter of accumulated experience, concrete in a body of law by which it is best to abide. The former conception is strong in Plato. Conceiving politics as an art, he believes in a single artist or statesman; he believes, again, in the free creative impulse which is the life-breath of art, and which would be stifled by rules and conventions; and finally he believes that the art of politics, like all other arts, is directed to achieving a mean and creating a harmony, and that such achievement and creation are only possible when the artist is free and unhindered. Here, in this reference to a mean and to harmony, we touch the last, and perhaps the most important, of all the factors which enter into the conception of statesmanship propounded in the *Politicus* (305 E-311 B).

Absolutism Justified by the Argument of Social Harmony

Already, in an earlier passage in the dialogue, in which he is occupied by a discussion of the nature of weaving, Plato has laid it down that all arts—the art of weaving, or of statesmanship, or of discussion itself—will be ruined unless they observe a mean. They are all on the watch against excess and defect; and it is by observance of a mean that they produce all creations of excellence and beauty (284 A-B). All arts, in a word, aim at an ideal, and that ideal is nothing infinite or indefinite, but something finite and definite; something elusive, and yet exact; a point which an art may undershoot or overshoot, but yet a fixed point. Here we observe the influence of that Pythagorean doctrine of Limit, which affected both Plato and Aristotle so deeply (*supra*, p. 49).[1] In that doctrine, as we

[1] As has already been remarked (*supra*, p. 48 n. 1), it is possible that Pythagorean ideas lie behind Plato's general advocacy of absolutism in the *Politicus*. A passage from a Pythagorean writer (quoted in Campbell's introduction to the *Politicus*, xxv), reads very like the argument of Plato: "The monarch has an irresponsible authority (and is therefore not limited by consent): he is a living law; he is like a god among men". This last phrase (θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις) seems to have been a regular catch-word (*cf. Politicus*, 303 B, and Arist., *Pol.*, 1284, a 10-11). It is curious to notice that Alexander did actually pose as a god among men, and that the deification of the ruler, issuing in his right to claim προσκύνησις, was the foundation of his Empire.

have seen, the limit of each thing, or class of things, was identified with the mean, and the mean was regarded as a 'mixture'—or, in the language of the art of music, from which the whole doctrine sprang, as a 'harmony'—which blended two opposites. It follows on such a doctrine that it is the function of every true artist to produce such a mixture or harmony, in the class of things with which he deals, by discovering and observing a mean; and Plato, regarding the statesman as an artist, is led to apply this conclusion to statesmanship. Like the weaver, who unites in a just harmony the warp and the woof, the statesman must unite the different elements and strands of human nature. Like the musician, who finds the harmony of the high note and the low, he must find a harmony in the sad music of humanity.[1] Human life has its high and its low notes: there is the note of manly courage, which runs up into the excess of mad foolhardiness, and the note of temperate moderation, which slips down into the defect of timid indolence. Some men are marked by one of these qualities, and some by another; and as it is with individuals, so it is with classes in the State—there is a military class which degenerates into militarism in its excess of courage, and a peaceful class which in its excess of moderation slips into pacificism (307 E-308 A). Life does not show a unity of virtue: it shows one virtue differing from another—and, indeed, inimical and hostile to another—one type of man opposed to another type, one class in the State set over against another class (306 B-C).[2] It is here that the statesman must enter, and it is here that he will find his function. He must discover a mean and mix different temperaments in a harmony.[3] Some natures, which are entirely unsuitable, he will eliminate, condemning to death or exile those who have neither temperance nor courage nor any virtue, and assigning to slavery those who are ignorant and base. The rest, when they have been selected by tests and prepared by training, he will combine[4] as the weaver combines the warp and the

[1] Plato takes human nature and music together in the *Politicus* as equally subject to the rule of the mean. The manly and quick element appears in body, soul, *and the movement of sound* (306 C-D): the temperate and slow element is manifested alike in thought, action, *and sounds* (307 A); and a mean has to be found in all alike. The connection with Pythagorean ideas seems clear (*cf.* the *Laws*, 967 E: *infra*, p. 318).

[2] Plato here seems to put out of court the Socratic idea of the unity of goodness; and on this point there is a contrast, or rather a contradiction, between the *Protagoras* and the *Politicus*.

[3] Plato's application of the conception of the mean to ethics and politics in the *Politicus* has many affinities with Aristotle's use of the same conception in the *Ethics*. The connection between the early part of the *Politicus* and the *Ethics* has already been remarked. We must remember that Aristotle was Plato's pupil; and if he does not follow the Plato of the *Republic*, whom he had never known (he was born about the time of the composition of the *Republic*), he certainly follows the Plato of the *Politicus* and the *Laws*, whose lectures he had attended. On the references to the *Politicus* in Aristotle, see Campbell's introduction to his edition, liv-lvi.

[4] Campbell remarks that this double process of elimination and combination is "the counterpart of the twofold process of dialectic, by which the objects of thought are distinguished and combined" (introduction, p. xv). The statesman, in the exercise of practical reason, must go through the same process of differentiation (διαίρεσις) and of synthesis (συναγωγή), which the pure reason also follows in its own operations,

woof; and here Plato compares the courageous nature to the tauter strands of the warp, and the temperate nature to the softer threads of the woof. There will be two ways in which he will seek to achieve this harmony—the one spiritual, the other bodily; the one divine, the other human. First and foremost, he will combine all virtues, all types of men and all classes by a common education, in a common opinion about the things which are good and just and of honourable report, so that each shall lose his particular excess or defect, and all shall attain to the measure of a common harmony. Then (but this is a less matter) he will combine in marriage the different types of men and women, who represent different qualities, so that, instead of like marrying like (as is the fashion of men when left to mere inclination), different and yet complementary natures shall be mated, and harmony shall ensue in the whole of society.[1] In a final suggestion (in which we may see a slight hint of the mixed constitution of the *Laws*), Plato proposes that the same principle shall be extended to the filling of offices, and that, when a number of men are needed for discharge of an office, care should be taken to select from the different types—the courageous and active, and the moderate and cautious—for the sake of more balanced action and a proper harmony. Here the analogy of weaving, which seemed (but only seemed) to be casually introduced, has attained its full explanation, and with it the doctrine of the mean has received its full application.[2]

We may pause to compare the ideal which is here suggested with that of the *Republic*. There are some similarities, and many differences. The two methods of weaving in the former correspond to the two schemes of the latter—the scheme of a common education and the scheme of community of wives; and when Plato suggests (310 A) that the second method of weaving is consequent on the first, and hardly needs to be explained, he is echoing a passage in the *Republic* in which we are told that, if the citizens are well educated, they will see their way through matters like marriage for themselves (423 E-424 A). On the other hand no system of education is sketched in the *Politicus*:[3] there is no speech of community of wives[4] and still less of community of property; and though there is something of a

[1] It may be urged, with much truth, that a statesman with so lofty a function, and so free a scope, is really the divine shepherd of the myth *redivivus*. Plato cannot but bring the ideal down among men, and into his own age, even after admitting that it only belongs to a golden age.

[2] This is the argument of the last section of the *Politicus*, 309-311. The suggestion that offices shall be filled on the principle of mixture comes at the end, 310 E-311 A.

[3] There is only a brief suggestion that statesmanship, as the mistress of all lawful educators and instructors, will entrust the citizens to proper teachers under its authority, in order that they may be prepared for its purposes (308 D-E).

[4] More exactly, there is one passing reference to community of wives, as one of the features of the golden age of Cronus (272 A). The reference, if we take it seriously, would seem to show that Plato had come to believe that communism belonged to cloud-land or the *Saturnia regna*, but not to actual cities or to men of his own day (Campbell, introduction, p. xxxvii).

eugenic purpose in the scheme of marriage between different temperaments, it is different from that which appears in the *Republic*. Another point of comparison between the two dialogues may be found in their psychological basis. There is the same attempt to distinguish different elements of human nature: the same view that different temperaments represent those different elements; the same view that the difference of classes is based on this difference of temperaments. But the elements of the *Politicus* are different from those of the *Republic*. Plato speaks of courage and moderation instead of spirit and appetite: the element of reason only appears in the statesman; and the classes of the *Politicus*, unlike those of the *Republic*, represent social types and not social occupations. Accordingly justice, in the sense of the discharge of specific function, is not the ideal of the *Politicus*, which is rather the virtue termed in the *Republic* temperance or self-control; and it is the blending of different types in a unison, rather than the specialisation of different classes on their separate functions, that is emphasised. The system of government advocated in the *Politicus* is no less absolute than that of the *Republic*; but in the former, as we shall see presently (and this is perhaps the fundamental difference between the two dialogues), Plato adopts a different and much less uncompromising attitude towards actual States, and especially towards democracy, than he does in the latter.

Absolutism Modified by the Idea of the Rule of Law

Modern analogies may be cited for some of Plato's arguments in favour of absolutism. When he advocates the reign of scientific knowledge, using its powers free from legal restraint for the benefit of the State, he is advancing an argument which was not unfamiliar in seventeenth century England. That century was the age of science: it was the age of Galileo and Descartes; and it produced a number of votaries of scientific government. Among them Bacon stands pre-eminent. His theory of government was a theory of scientific monarchy, which was not to be controlled in its action by the common law and its judges (as Coke held), but was entitled, when reason of State intervened, to guide its steps by its own knowledge and to demand the acquiescence of the judges. When Bacon, in his Essay on Judicature, presses the doctrine of *salus populi*, and bids judges know "that Lawes, except they bee in Order to that End, are but Things Captious, and Oracles not well Inspired," he was speaking Platonically. The general Stuart theory of prerogative had indeed its Platonic affinities. Flexibility was its note: it was defended on the ground that common law could not meet the multiplicity of circumstances (especially in the sphere of economic life) or cope with the rapid vicissitudes of events. Prerogative did not dispense with law, as Plato would have dispensed with law, but it stood outside and

even, some of its champions held, above law; and the sovereign who wielded it was to be free, whenever benefit of State required, to promote that benefit by his esoteric knowledge. Like the argument of flexibility, the argument of social harmony has also been employed in favour of monarchy in modern times.[1] It is conspicuous, for instance, in German theory in the nineteenth century. Starting from a distinction between the State and Society, and a conception of Society as composed of different and antagonistic elements, German thinkers advocated a form of State in which the sovereign monarch, vested with a mediating and neutral authority, establishes a mean and creates a harmony between the various interests of society. The German conception of society is economic, and the differences which divide society are regarded as economic: Plato's conception of the elements of the State is ethical, and the differences which he seeks to compose are ethical; but an affinity still remains between the two conceptions. An affinity may also be traced between the theory of the *Politicus* and some of the elements of Positivism. Impressed by the incompetence of the ruling classes, and by the want of political ability which the other classes betray, some of the Positivists have placed their hopes in a dictatorial power "representing the interests of the classes that are growing, and at the same time strong enough to protect the weaker and decaying—a power able to act as a mediator". Such a dictator "wielding the whole executive power; owning no constitutional check; not the theoretic, but the actual head of the State, securing unity to its policy," would form "the highest function of society". The dictator, however, is only provisional, "to satisfy the wants of a transitional State"; and in this respect the Positivist differs from Plato, who contemplates a permanent dictator.[2]

In spite of analogies, however, the Platonic argument for absolutism raises a number of grave questions. Is it possible for any intelligence, however high, to play as freely with human life as Plato suggests? Human nature, especially in the aggregate, is difficult stuff: can it be moulded so readily? Human wills, the reformer finds to his cost, are impregnably fortified in custom and prejudice: can all the forts ever be carried, and has not accumulated experience, after all, its truth? These are questions which Plato must have put to himself

[1] It may be suggested that the Stuarts, who stood for flexibility, also stood for the cause of social harmony. They would have developed harmoniously the interests of the copyholders, the landed magnates, and the mercantile class. It is the tragedy of English history that they failed (though on other grounds they deserved to fail), and that a combination of landed magnates and leaders of the commercial class took over the direction of English life, and directed it on the lines of individual interest.

[2] *Cf.* Congreve, edition of the *Politics*, pp. 503 *sqq*. Comte himself was in favour of a dictatorship wielded by a triumvirate. There is also something Platonic in Comte's belief that "the highest rank is held by the speculative class," and in his assignation to that class of "educational functions and a regular intervention as moderator in social disputes". *Cf. infra*, p. 391.

in later years, and as he answered them he came upon a new phase of his political thought, in which he makes his peace with reality, and acknowledges that there is room in political life for consent and law and constitutionalism and all the slow unscientific ways of the actual world of men. Hitherto he had gone against the cherished and current beliefs of his people—its belief in the sovereignty of law; its belief in free association, where each counts for one, each has his say, and all are 'equal and like'—and he must have appeared, as in some respects he was, an advocate of that tyranny which the Greeks hated with such a perfect hatred, because it murdered law and self-government and equality. At the end of the *Politicus*, and at the age, perhaps, of nearly seventy, he begins to recognise the value of current belief and conservative principle. Just as before he had acknowledged that the divine shepherd was not for all ages, so now he confesses that the absolute ruler is not for all States. He too is like a god among men, and the days of his epiphany tarry. And so in his old age, Plato leaves the pure idealism of the city of the *Republic* for an investigation and appreciation of the actual cities of men, admitting the value which actual States, in spite of their laws and elections and imperfections, may nevertheless possess as approximations to and images of the ideal.

There is a dilemma in affairs to which we may shut our eyes in discussing ideal conditions, but which has to be faced as soon as we deal with things as they are. It is one side of the dilemma that to bind art by rules is to stifle art. It is another side of the dilemma that, if men leave unfettered the practitioner of an art which handles human affairs and interests, they are likely to find that he has sacrificed their interests to his own. It helps towards a solution of this dilemma if we notice two peculiarities of the political art. In the first place, while any other art would be stifled by rules, and the production of its object would cease, there is a wonderful vitality in the object with which political art is concerned. The natural strength of the political bond is marvellous (302 A); and it refuses to break even when the uniting and harmonising action of true political art is removed. Even if we have the hard letter of law in place of the living mind of the genuine 'statesman,' our State may still endure and our society still cohere. In the second place, there is greater likelihood in the art of politics that the artist may cease to act as an artist, concerned with the betterment of the object of his art, and may seek his own advantage, than there is in the other arts. There is more need for the protection of the subject against his ruler than there is for the protection of the patient against his physician. Such protection must take the form of law. Law, after all, is the product of experience and wise men (300 A). It is lower than the free discourse of wisdom, but it is at any rate an image of wisdom in the sense in which an automaton may be the image of a living

thing. A State which is based on law will be, after all, a copy of the ideal State; and though we may condemn it when we remember that it is only a copy, we may approve it when we remember what it copies.

The basis of the law-state is distrust of the government. Experience has convinced men of its misdoings; and they have determined that it shall no longer exercise an absolute control of their affairs. An assembly is accordingly instituted, either of the whole people, or of the well-to-do only, in which everybody who possesses the necessary qualification of free birth or property is free to express his opinion, whatever his profession, and whatever his knowledge or ignorance of politics. The assembly has its solemn deliberations: it receives advice, skilled or unskilled; and the result of its deliberations is a set of laws by which, and under which, the government must act for the future. For greater security, it is determined that the government shall have no permanence of tenure; its members must be appointed annually, and (if the assembly is one of the whole people) they must also be appointed by lot. When their year of office expires, they must be brought before a court of audit, composed of judges drawn either from the well-to-do or from the whole people; and if they are found to have contravened the laws, they must be punished accordingly. With a code of law, short tenure of office, and annual responsibility of officials for failure to observe the code of law, there is no room for the free action of knowledge; and the law-state prohibits knowledge not only by the bonds in which it binds its officials, but also by the penalties with which it visits philosophical inquiry into politics. If any man attempts any such speculation, he will be termed a Sophist; and if he persists, he will be tried and punished with the full rigour of the law, on the ground that he corrupts the youth by persuading young men to follow the profession of politics in the light of knowledge rather than by the rules of law, and by teaching them to exercise an arbitrary rule over their fellows. Thus for the last time, even in the act of seeking to justify to himself the ways of the democratic law-state, Plato recurs to the memory of his murdered master (297-298).

If men combined to treat pilots and physicians in the way in which they treat governments, it would seem very absurd, and pilots and physicians might very well revolt. But when the law-state is once there, it is best that the people should obey the law on which it rests. It is one thing to act without law when there is no law: it is another thing to act against law when there is a law. It is possible, indeed, to act against the law because the actor has knowledge of something better; and such action is like the action of the true statesman in the State which has no law. But it is also possible to act against the law because the actor has a selfish interest to

advance; and such action is far worse than action in obedience to law.[1] There is always a chance that action against the law will be of this latter kind (300 B); and in States governed by an aristocracy or a democracy, where the governing body is of some size, and therefore *ex hypothesi* unable to attain true knowledge (*supra*, p. 276), there is a certainty that it will be of this latter kind. It follows that the best course in such States is faithful observance of law; for since law is a copy of the true knowledge which they can never attain, they will make the nearest approach to the government of true knowledge by observing the rule of law (300 E-301 A). It is a grave pity that such a form of State should be necessary. The law-state is the product of disbelief in the ideal ruler and an ideal art of politics: it is a form of incredulity. It is a home of misery, and not of happiness (301 E). Speculation is not free: ability is not recognised: right is not seated on its throne. But it endures; and if survival is not a test of truth, it is at any rate a title to respect.

The Platonic Classification of States

The comparison here made between the ideal and the real naturally leads to a comparison and a classification of different forms of States. The distinction between the State governed by knowledge and States which are governed by laws, and the further distinction between law-states in which law is observed and those in which it is violated, already imply in themselves a certain classification of constitutions. There is the pure monarchical State characterised by a principle of reason flexible because it is personal: there are law-states also marked by a principle of reason, but by a principle which is legal and therefore rigid; and there are arbitrary States marked by the absence of any principle and by a flexibility which simply means instability.[2] The distinction which Plato draws between the first and the second class is formally similar—but fundamentally dissimilar—to that which we now draw between flexible and rigid constitutions. We speak of flexibility where a constitution can be readily altered by the vote of the people or its representatives: we speak of rigidity when the reverse is the case. To us flexibility means the ready response of the constitution of the State to the will of its members; and it seems to us desirable because otherwise there is danger of deadlock or revolution. To Plato flexibility meant the ready response of a government to the *nuance* of the case to be treated or the character to be judged; and

[1] The reference to the possibility of resistance, coupled with the defence of obedience to the law, in this passage, may remind us of the argument of the *Apology* and the *Crito* (*supra*, pp. 121-3).

[2] Campbell compares (introduction, xlviii), perhaps somewhat fancifully, the argument of the *Critias*. Here there is first of all a description of ancient Athens, which corresponds to the first class: there is a description of ancient Atlantis, in the days when it respected law, which corresponds to the second class; and Plato is just beginning, when the dialogue breaks off, to give a description of Atlantis in its lawless days, which would have corresponded to the third class.

it seemed to him desirable because otherwise there was danger of a rigid application of law. In order to make sure of the exact response of a government to such shades of difference, he was willing to disregard the need of any response to the will of the citizens; and he thus attained flexibility in his sense at the cost of flexibility in our sense. The form of government he advocates, free from any control by the people, is rigid in our sense of the word: the law-state which he consents to tolerate, controlled as it is by law and the assembly which makes the law, more nearly approaches our idea of flexibility.

Besides this implied classification, there is also an explicit and detailed classification in the *Politicus*. The classification of States was probably one of the first elements in the theory of the State to engage the attention of the Sophists. Teachers by profession, they had something of a scholastic instinct for classification; and the method of Prodicus, for instance, with its emphasis on the distinction of synonyms, could readily be applied to the drawing of distinctions between the different species of States which were comprehended under the same name. One of the first essays in classification, probably composed under sophistic influence, may be found in a famous passage of Herodotus. Here a number of Persian grandees are made to compare the merits of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy; and their verdict is that they all suffer from evils which in each case ultimately involve a tyranny. Democracy at its best means equality before the law, an elective and responsible executive, and the right of the people to exercise deliberative power. But the people do not know, for they have never been taught, what is fitting and proper; they can be more tyrannical than the worst tyrant in their ignorant caprice; and their incapacity permits a public corruption, which ultimately provokes a revolt of the masses led by a champion who becomes a tyrant. Aristocracy means the predominance of good birth and breeding; but the members of an aristocracy are touchy on the point of honour, and quarrels easily arise which develop into civil war, and culminate in tyranny. Monarchy again, at its best, means due regard to the welfare of the whole State, and capable conduct of foreign policy; but the monarch is liable to the intoxication of power, and falling into insolence and a jealousy of all merit, he becomes a tyrant.[1] While Herodotus thus condemns all constitutions, the orators of Athens praise democracy, and condemn the rest. Democracy is the government of equality, and the home of impersonal law. It gives power to all classes, and favours none; all other constitutions represent the rule of a section, and are based on privilege.[2] This encomium of democracy was answered by some of

[1] III. 80-2.

[2] This is the line taken in Athenagoras' speech at Syracuse, reported by Thucydides and mentioned above (p. 150).

the Sophists with the praise of tyranny, as the government most consonant with the natural principle of the rule of the strong. The teaching of Socrates was hostile to the advocates both of democracy and of tyranny. It was his great principle, as we have seen, that government was an art, and, as such, demanded a knowledge which was not to be found in democracy, with its incapable assembly and equally incapable officials, and required an unselfish regard to the subject's good, which the tyrant could never show. This would suggest a classification of States according as their rulers were unselfish and wise, or selfish and unwise. But the Socratic classification, as reported by Xenophon, is not quite so systematic or simple. Taking monarchy, aristocracy and democracy as the three main classes, Socrates, we are told, divided each of the two former into a good and a bad species. Monarchy proper he distinguished from tyranny by the two criteria of its respect for law and the consent of its subjects;[1] aristocracy proper he distinguished from oligarchy, on the somewhat different ground that it recognised capacity, while the other only recognised wealth; and he condemned democracy (of which he only made one type, and found that evil) for the want of knowledge which it showed. Thus we get five constitutions, two of them—monarchy and aristocracy—good; the other three—tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy—bad.

There are two detailed schemes of classification of constitutions in the *Politicus*. The first of these is incidental, as we have seen, and it represents current theory rather than Plato's own view.[2] It starts from the criterion of number, which gives the three forms of the rule of the one, the few, and the many; while by the further criteria of the compulsory or involuntary nature of that rule, and its legal or non-legal character, the two first forms (but not the third) are each subdivided into two species (291). In this scheme there are thus five constitutions—royalty, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy. In the second scheme (302 C-303 A), which is Plato's own, seven constitutions are distinguished. A new form of monarchy—that of the Statesman who governs by perfect knowledge—is added; and Plato thus distinguishes three forms of the rule of the one—ideal monarchy, legal monarchy, and tyranny. Again democracy, of which there was only one type in the first scheme, is now subdivided into the two species of legal democracy and arbitrary (or extreme) democracy. The criteria used to achieve this classification are that of number; that of knowledge, which

[1] Xen., *Mem.*, IV. 6, 12; but see the next note.

[2] The five forms which Plato mentions recur in the *Laws* (712 C), and they are there said to be those "commonly recognised" (714 B). Incidentally it may be remarked that they tally with the five which Xenophon ascribes to Socrates. This is an argument, however, not so much for believing that they are Socratic in origin, as for thinking that Xenophon fathered current commonplaces on his master. And this is very likely (*supra*, p. 93).

distinguishes ideal monarchy from all other constitutions, and sets it in a class apart; and that of respect or disrespect for law, in virtue of which a distinction is drawn between the good and bad forms of the three constitutions indicated by the criterion of number. Nothing is said about the criterion of consent, but it may be held to be involved in the criterion of law; and nothing is said about social factors, such as the presence or absence of a property qualification, though in the former scheme they are mentioned, if not actually employed, as criteria. Excluding the perfect State, or absolute monarchy, "as if it were a god"—leaving the ideal, which is nevertheless still our standard, and concentrating our attention upon the actual—we have therefore two great divisions of existing States. There are law-states, and there are arbitrary states: there are States which obey the law, and therefore approximate, as a second best, to the State of perfect knowledge, and there are States which disobey the law, and therefore fall doubly short of the ideal standard. Either of these may be subdivided by a principle of number, and according as the rulers are one or few or many; and in this way we attain the following scheme:—

I

[Outside and above any scheme, the perfect State of perfect knowledge freed from the impediment of law—the ideal State of the *Republic.*]

Law-states, directed by a knowledge expressed in law, by which they faithfully act:—

(i) The rule of one, or constitutional (as opposed to ideal) monarchy.
(ii) The rule of few, or aristocracy.
(iii) The rule of many, or democracy of a moderate and constitutional kind.

II

Arbitrary States, which disobey the law in which the knowledge that should guide them is expressed:—

(i) The rule of one, or tyranny.
(ii) The rule of few, or oligarchy.
(iii) The rule of many, or extreme democracy.

Of the six constitutions which thus emerge, Plato places monarchy first, and tyranny last; the rule of a single man is strongest both for good and for evil, because authority is placed undivided in his hands. The rule of the many, on the contrary, is weakest for vice, and weakest for virtue, because power is infinitesimally divided among an infinity of authorities; and accordingly, while Plato thinks

extreme democracy the first and best of arbitrary states, he regards constitutional democracy as the third and worst of law-states.[1]

This scheme of classification, and the order of value here suggested, show a change in Plato's political attitude, which also appears in the general tone of the *Politicus*. There is a greater degree of realism than in the *Republic*. Idealism is very far from having disappeared; but it coexists with a more realistic apprehension of actual politics, and a new recognition of the virtue which may be found in the second best. The ideal remains as a standard: it has ceased to be a consuming fire. The classification of States in the *Politicus* is thus quite different from that in the *Republic*. Democracy, in both its forms, is now placed above oligarchy, which in the *Republic* was placed above democracy; and this is a significant change. The memory still survives of the days in which a democratic State slew the prophet of knowledge; but the memory is far less acute than it was in the days of the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, and the judgment on democracy is correspondingly less severe. There is hardly an echo of the old verdict of condemnation pronounced on the State whose very nature was held to be unjust, because it was based on denial of the principle of discharge of specific function. Seeing the value of law, as the fruit of experience and invention of wisdom, Plato can now see the value of a democracy which is based on the rule of law; and in the *Laws*, which carries further many of the hints of the *Politicus*, we shall find him advocating a union of legal monarchy and legal democracy as the form of constitution next to that of the ideal State itself.[2]

[1] It is obvious how much the *Politics* is like the *Politicus* on this point, and in regard to the whole subject of classification. But the debt of the *Politics* to the *Politicus* has already been emphasised.

[2] It is possible that the attitude of the *Politicus* represents a return to Plato's early views, in the days before the shock of the death of Socrates, when, as he tells us in the Seventh *Epistle*, he was contemplating a political career in democratic Athens. We have also to remember that the rejuvenated Athenian democracy, as it stood just before the middle of the fourth century, may well have appeared in a different light to Plato from the old democracy which he condemned.

Chapter XIII

THE *LAWS* AND ITS THEORY OF THE STATE

The Genesis and Character of the Laws

According to the tradition of antiquity the *Laws* is a posthumous work, published, within a year of Plato's death (347), by a pupil and amanuensis, Philip of Opus. This is apparently the reason for some of the gaps, and some of the inconsistencies, which Plato, dying with the work unfinished, had left behind, and his editor did not seek to remove. The plan of the *Laws* may have occurred to Plato as early as 361, when we know, from the Seventh *Epistle*, that he was engaged with Dionysius the younger on the study of the proper 'preambles' to be attached to laws: its composition may be ascribed to the last ten years of his life, when he was an old man of over seventy.[1] The marks of old age are written large in many features of the *Laws*. Like Prospero in *The Tempest*—the last of Shakespeare's plays—when he breaks his magic staff and drowns his book in the deeps, Plato has come to feel that men, who play their part in "this unsubstantial pageant," are

> such stuff
> As dreams are made on.

"Man in his fashion is a sort of puppet of God, and this, in truth, is the best of him" (803 C). He has come to feel that God is everything, and man is a little thing; but along with this deeper sense of religious truth there has also come a certain rigour, and in the last books of the *Laws* we may hear

> Rumores . . . senum severiorum.

The style, as well as the content, suggests the declining years of the writers.[2] There is something of garrulity: there is an increasing

[1] In Book I (638 B) Plato alludes to the Athenian conquest of the island of Ceos, which had revolted in 364 and again in 363. He also mentions the Syracusan treatment of Locri Epizephyrii. This may be a reference to the tyrannical rule of Dionysius at Locri during the period of his exile from Syracuse (356-346). It follows that Book I was written after 363, and possibly after 356.

[2] The vocabulary, as well as the style, of the *Laws* is different from that of the earlier dialogues. This has led some writers to pronounce the *Laws* spurious; but their view has found no acceptance. Others again, while believing that there is a genuine core, have contended that there is a large amount of addition and interpolation by later hands; and they have sought to separate the wheat from the chaff. The attempt is at once unnecessary and unsuccessful. It is only an instance of the constant tendency of German scholars to split ancient writings into *Urschrift* and *Nachschrift*.

forgetfulness, which often leads to repetitions and sometimes to inconsistencies; there is less artistic power. Plato preserves the form, but not the spirit, of the dialogue; and the *Laws* is really a monologue by an Athenian stranger in the presence of two patient, and generally polite, listeners—a Cretan and a Spartan. It is difficult to detect the plan on which the work is written, or to trace the connection of its parts; but here we have to remember that Plato, believing that discourse should wander "as the argument listeth," is never concerned to follow any obvious logical scheme.[1] The first four books are of the nature of a preface, which falls into two unconnected parts—the first two books dealing with song and dance and wine, and their place in education; the third treating generally of the historical development of States, and the fourth of the prolegomena or general principles of politics. The next four books are occupied with the construction of a constitution (including a system of education and of social relations) which is to be based on law and to come next in order of excellence to the constitution depicted in the *Republic*. The next main section (Books IX to XI) contains a legal code, and may be said to be, in some respects, the essence of the dialogue. The ninth book contains the criminal, and the eleventh the civil code: between the two comes 'the book of the law' of religion, in which Plato discusses the principles of a true religious belief and fixes the penalties for the crime of heresy. The last book may be termed an epilogue: new political institutions are introduced, in a way which seems to suggest an afterthought and a postscript; and the tone of the dialogue, in spite of Plato's profession that he is concerned with a State which falls short of the ideal, recurs to the idealism of the *Republic*. On the whole the dialogue gains in power (though not as a dialogue) during its course; and the four last books of the *Laws* are not only the finest part of the *Laws*—they are also among the finest of all the writings of Plato. He appears less as a poet and philosopher, and more as a law-giver and prophet. As a law-giver he not only systematises Greek law in the spirit of a Bentham, but he also attempts, in his 'preambles,' to explain the first principles on which his code is based. As a prophet, he attains, in the course of Book X, to a height of argument little removed from that of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets. We may say to ourselves, as we begin to read the *Laws*, "quantum mutatus ab illo": we can only say, as we end, "It is Plato still; and what would not Plato have made of this matter thirty years before".[2]

[1] At the same time, one may trace a difference between the *Republic* and the *Laws*. In the former, the argument may wander from the road; but it is close at hand, and can be readily and firmly brought back from its browsing. In the latter the argument wanders farther afield, until Plato suddenly awakens to the fact, and seeks to recall it by devious ways. "The argument ought to be pulled up from time to time, and not be allowed to run away, but held with bit and bridle" (701 C).

[2] The defects of the *Laws* seem to me to be largely defects of literary form. Plato at fifty would have made a great work out of material which he makes, at the age of eighty, into a work that seems at first sight mediocre. I agree with Constantine Ritter,

The cardinal change which Plato's views had undergone by the time he wrote the *Laws* is indicated in the very title of the dialogue. Hitherto he had believed in the free rule of a personal intelligence, duly trained for its work, but exercising an *imperium legibus solutum*. He had hoped himself to train such an intelligence, along the lines propounded in the *Republic* and followed in the Academy. At Syracuse he had seemed to find his opportunity. Here he might show the value of philosophy; and here, turning a young tyrant into a philosopher-king, he might point the way for the salvation of Greece. At Syracuse he had failed. Undaunted by failure, he cast about to find another way. If he could not train a philosophic ruler who should rule without and instead of law, might he not make law itself philosophic, and promulgate a philosophic code for all States to follow? He would still be turning philosophy to practical account, which was always the thought dearest to his heart: it might still be, if not the educator of princes, at any rate the legislator of States. It would miss, indeed, its highest vocation (Plato never abandoned the ideal of the *Republic*, or ceased to believe that the ideal State must be governed directly and personally by the philosophic mind[1]); but if a State could only be indirectly governed by philosophy, through an impersonal code of philosophic law, the 'second best' would have been attained. A State so governed would still require some form of personal rule for the administration of the law; and this, in default of a philosophic monarchy, superseding all other claimants, might be found in a blend or combination of the different elements—monarch and people; rich and poor—which in actual States contend for political power. Thus the law-state, combined with a mixed constitution, comes to be the dominant political idea of Plato's later years. It is a half-way house, as it were, between the ideal and the actual: it is a sub-ideal State, near enough to actual conditions to be incorporated readily into actual life. It is a return, we may also note, to the general Greek idea of the rule of a fundamental law—an idea against which Plato, seeking to substitute mind itself for the laws which it makes, and the principles which lie behind law for its written enactments, had been so long a rebel.

who writes (in *Platos Gesetze*, which contains both a summary and a commentary): "I do not hesitate to describe the work, along with the *Republic*, as one of the most magnificent monuments of the culture of ancient Hellas, and as one of the finest and most admirable books that I know" (preface, p. v). I may add that in wealth of knowledge, alike of human nature and of human institutions, and in detailed application of principles to actual life, the *Laws* transcends the *Republic*.

[1] He did not abandon the ideal, but he abandoned the hope of its realisation (*cf.* 875). But there are many echoes of the *Republic* in the *Laws*. His hope of philosopher-kings recurs in the *Laws* (709 E-712 A): "There neither is, nor ever will be, a better or speedier way of establishing a constitution than by tyranny" (710 B). Again, in a famous passage in Book V (739 B-E; *cf.* VII, 807 B), he speaks of the communism of the *Republic* as the true ideal, and of the scheme of the *Laws* as only a *pis aller*. Finally, at the end of Book XII, as we shall see, he harks back to the lines of education sketched in Book VII of the *Republic* as the only true lines, and seems to revert, in spite of all that he has said of the second best, to the old ideal.

The change is great: it cleaves Plato's political theory into two distinct halves. On the one side is the guardian (φύλαξ) of the Republic, unfettered by law: on the other is the "guardian of the law" (νομοφύλαξ), who is its "servant" and is even described as its "slave". Yet if there is change, there is also consistency. The two ideals are not opposites: they are complements. The first had always been, and still continued to be, the absolute ideal of Plato: the second is a secondary or relative ideal—secondary, as compared with the ideal of the *Republic*; relative, as adapted to the exigencies of actual life.[1] Nor, again, was the change sudden, or without its cogent causes. The *Politicus* already shows Plato ready to recognise that in actual States it is better to have law than the absence of law: it shows him prepared to admit the value of a combination of the different elements of a community, in education, in social life, and in government (*supra*, p. 282). The metaphor from the art of the weaver, who knits together the warp and the woof, is common to the *Politicus* and the *Laws* (734). The course of Syracusan history—the most potent of all the influences in actual life on the development of Plato's political theory—helped to complete a change which, as the *Politicus* shows, was already imminent. We have seen, in describing the life of Plato, that he followed, with anxious attention, the difficulties and the contentions which arose at Syracuse after the expulsion of Dionysius by Dion in 357. If his experience at the hands of Dionysius had driven the absolute ideal into the background, the troubles encountered by his friends after the fall of Dionysius served to bring the secondary ideal into the foreground; and we may learn from the *Epistles* how Plato's thoughts began to turn to the value of a mixed constitution and a code of impartial law (*supra*, p. 115).

Nor must we forget, when we seek to trace the genesis of the *Laws*, that the Academy was a nurse of legislators, and that it must have been, in some measure, a school of law. The detailed regulations of civil and criminal law which appear in the last four books—enactments based on the law of Greece and especially of Athens—presuppose a technical and systematic study of Greek jurisprudence. A current generalisation assigns art and philosophy to the Greeks, and government and jurisprudence (*hae tibi erunt artes*) to the Romans. The generalisation hardly does justice to the genius of the Greeks. Greek law has largely perished.[2] When Rome became

[1] Aristotle had equally his two ideals. The ideal State described in the seventh and eighth books of the *Politics* corresponds in intention (though many of its details find their parallel in the *Laws*; and this is significant of the sobriety of Aristotle's ideal) to Plato's *Republic*: the "polity," or mixed constitution, of the fourth book corresponds to the mixed State of the *Laws*. The debt of Aristotle to the *Laws* is illustrated in the note at the end of chapter xvii.

[2] The laws of Solon were still known, and still a subject of comment and study, in the time of Tiberius. Archæological discoveries, and the work of scholars on these discoveries, have in the last fifty years recreated the subject of Greek law. The discovery in 1884 of the laws of Gortyn, a Cretan law of the family going back, in part, to

mistress of the Mediterranean basin, Roman law gradually became the law of the Mediterranean world; and Roman law has survived. But Roman law, like Roman art and literature, was largely the gift of the Greeks. It is not merely a matter of the influence of the Stoic idea of a common law of nature on the Roman *jus naturæ* (that influence has probably been over-rated by Sir Henry Maine); it is a matter of the debt of Rome, as early as the fifth century, to the actual law of Greece. Law and legislation bulked largely in Greece from the age of the legislators (*circ.* 600) onwards. Systematic legislation, such as that of the Code Napoleon, was regular, sometimes in old States, but more often in colonies. When a colony was founded, a legislator, or a legislative commission, was appointed by the State which was founding the colony, or by the colonists, for the purpose of giving a constitution and a code. This is exactly the case which Plato envisages in the *Laws*. The city of Cnossus, he imagines, is about to found a colony; and he sketches the lines on which the legislator of that colony might act.[1] In the imaginary case, as in actual life, we may see constitution-making and law-making going hand in hand; and this suggests a reflection. The political speculation of the Greek philosophers about the best constitution is not merely political speculation: it is also legal speculation. They are seeking an ideal law, or *Naturrecht*, at the same time that they are seeking an ideal State. There is, as yet, no distinction between a science of politics and a science of jurisprudence. And since this is so, it follows that the Greeks, who founded political speculation, also founded, in the process, the theory of law.

Self-Control as the Principle of the Laws

Like Plato, we may begin with a preamble; and our preamble may contain, like his, a statement of the principles which underlie the laws and the constitution of the State which we have to describe. These principles may be summarised in a sentence. "The legislator, when making his laws, has in view not a part only of virtue, but all virtue" (630 E). The State, and the laws of the State, are necessary in order to ensure the moral betterment of the citizens,

the seventh century (though, in its present form, a redaction of the fifth), has helped to prove the reality of Greek law. Meanwhile papyrology is adding steadily to our knowledge; and French and German scholars (particularly the former) are busy, with these data at their command, in rediscovering Greek jurisprudence.

[1] While in the *Republic* Plato propounded a radical cure for old States, in the *Laws* he suggests a moderate and conservative constitution for a new State. He is acting, like many Greeks before him, as legislator for a colony: he is not seeking to revolutionise existing States by converting their governors into philosophers, and their social life into a system of communism. In this sense again the *Laws* stands on a lower level than the *Republic*. It is less ambitious: it is not an attempt to mould old and intractable material, but to shape new and malleable conditions. Plato, as he makes clear (736), starts with a clean slate, and without any difficulties of vested interests. Bentham, when he offered himself as a legislator (*supra*, p. 8 n. 1), was more ambitious, and offered to legislate for old communities.

and that not in one respect only, but in all; for "it cannot be supposed that those who know nothing of all the good of civic life can ever have attained the full development of virtue" (678 B). The legislator must thus begin with a clear conception of complete virtue. In the *Republic*, as we have seen, virtue is almost identified with justice. Justice means differentiation of function; and functions are so rigidly differentiated in the *Republic*, that the political organ, confined to its political function, loses all social rights, while the social or economic organ, confined to its economic functions, loses all political rights. There are guardians who have no property and no family, but possess a complete monopoly of government; and there are farmers, possessed of property and living in families, who have no vote and no control of any kind over the government. By the side of justice, and as a companion of justice (along with wisdom and courage), there is mentioned in the *Republic* a virtue of self-control or temperance. Self-control means the submission of appetite to the rule of reason; and in the *Republic* it is accordingly conceived as the virtue which results in the willing submission of the producing classes, which represent appetite, to the governing class which is the expression of reason. It is therefore a link between the social and political organs of the State, just as it is a link between the element of appetite and the element of reason in the individual soul; it produces a harmony of different elements and weaves together the warp and the woof of human nature. It is this virtue which, in place of justice, becomes the mainspring of the *Laws*. Plato's ideal becomes a union in harmony of different elements (a view already foreshadowed in the *Politicus*) rather than a differentiation of unity into specific functions. While in the *Republic*, therefore, self-control and the other virtues are subordinated to justice, in the *Laws* it is self-control which crowns and completes all other virtues, including the virtue of justice (*supra*, p. 153 note 2).

In the first place, wisdom depends upon self-control. Wisdom can only do its work, whether in our minds or in the State, where there is harmony (689 D). But harmony is the daughter of self-control; and we may therefore say that wisdom, the companion and sister of harmony, is also the offspring of self-control. With wisdom thus related to harmony, and thus dependent on self-control, we may expect, and we shall find, that there is no insistence in the *Laws* on the exclusive rule of wisdom, and no attempt to enthrone philosopher-kings. But it is not only the virtue of wisdom that depends on self-control: the same is true of the virtues of courage and justice. No virtue is virtuous, unless the complete virtue of self-control is first present: self-control is the prior condition, or rather it is the necessary completion (προσθήκη), alike of wisdom, of courage, and of justice (696). Nor is it only the crown of all virtues: it is also, because it is a free concord of appetite with reason, and because it issues in free self-direction

by a rational will, the essence of liberty. Man is only a free agent when rationally choosing, under the influence of self-control, a course which his reason assures him is right; and he is never less free than when, "doing as he likes," and losing control of his appetites, he falls a victim to his own worse self (626 E-628 A: 733 E-734 B).[1]

It follows on these conclusions that the legislator who adjusts his laws to producing in a State the complete virtue of self-control will attain three ends in one—"that the city for which he legislates shall be free; and secondly, at unity with herself; and thirdly, possessed of understanding" (701 D: 693 B). Such a city will be different from the city of the *Republic*. Self-control postulates no absolute differentiation of functions. Accordingly, in the *Laws* the rulers have both political and social rights; and the same is true of the ruled. The ruler has private property and a family; communism is abandoned, though common tables are retained; and the ruled have a voice and a vote in the election of their rulers. Such a State will not have the unity which springs from the co-operation of different elements, each contributing its special function to the life of the whole; but, permeated as it is by self-control, it will have a unity of sympathy none the less. Issuing as it does in sympathy, self-control brings us into a different atmosphere from that of the *Republic*—an atmosphere less rare, but more human; less clear, but also less cold.

Peace and War

If self-control is the crown and completion of the virtues, and the State must be based on self-control, it follows that a State which is based on any other virtue, and on that only, is in its nature wrong. A State which is based on the virtue of courage, and makes war its aim, is a perverted State. This is a point which the Athenian Stranger of the dialogue, discoursing as he is with a Spartan and a Cretan, is naturally led to make against the military States of Sparta and Crete. It is also a point which the actual process of history may well have led Plato to wish to make. Sparta, military State as she was, had gone down before Thebes at the battle of Mantinea in 362. The war-state was discredited, and an epoch of criticism of Sparta began, which finds a voice at once in the *Laws* of Plato and the *Politics* of Aristotle.[2] Nor was the fate of Sparta the only

[1] Freedom in the individual is the free action of the whole man according to the freely accepted will of the best part of his being. Freedom in the State is the free action of the whole State according to the freely accepted decision of its best representatives. "La Liberté," as Montesquieu said (*Esprit des Lois*, XI. 3), "ne peut consister qu'à pouvoir faire ce que l'*on doit vouloir*, et à n'être point contraint de faire ce que l'on *ne doit pas vouloir*."

[2] In the *Republic*, written during the days of the Spartan Empire, Plato had, by implication, criticised the Spartan constitution in the course of Book VIII, but he had also, to some extent, followed the model of Sparta in his system of communism and his advocacy of a course of State training of youth. In the *Laws* the position is

warning against militarism. In Sicily too the military tyranny of the Syracusan princes had recently proved fatal to liberty. In Greece, while Plato was writing the *Laws*, the Sacred War was showing the power and the character of those mercenary troops who are condemned in the *Republic* (575 B), as they are condemned, if for different reasons, in the *Prince* of Machiavelli. Meanwhile from the North the military power of Macedon was advancing slowly but surely southwards: Philip became king in 359: by 357 he was at war with Athens: in 351 Demosthenes delivered his first *Philippic*. Looking, it may be, at the signs of the times, Plato in the first book of the *Laws* preaches the sovereignty of peace, and criticises the type of State which like Sparta has made war its aim. His words have a modern ring and a modern application. To the militarist "peace is only a name; and every State in reality is in a constant state of war with every other, without any declaration, but also without any cessation" (626). So peace is subordinated to war, instead of war to peace; and men live in an armed peace in which all their institutions are directed to the gaining of victory, and of "all the good things of the vanquished," in the day when war at last comes. Such a policy may produce the one virtue of courage, but even the virtue of courage is lame without the support of self-control (634 A); and though men disciplined to courage may rise superior to pain, they will succumb (as the Spartans, indeed, had always tended to succumb) to those temptations of pleasure which they have never learned to control. "In reality" (as the militarist says, not knowing the nature of reality), there are wars to be waged within the State, which demand the true courage that is born of self-control, and demand in addition wisdom and justice. Evil is pitted against good in an inward conflict; and true courage, like all true virtue, can only be shown in those internal struggles in which education meets ignorance, and social justice is set against social injustice. Every State should look inward rather than outward:[1] every State should seek in the inward war not victory and annihilation, but final peace and lasting reconciliation through the harmony

reversed: Spartan training is criticised, and the Spartan constitution followed as a model. Sparta is a war-state only (Plato now writes), devoted to the one virtue of courage, and imperfect even in the exercise of that virtue; while her system of military training, which segregates young men from general social intercourse, and herds them together in a sort of camp-life, leads to unnatural vice (*cf. Laws*, 636 and 836, where Plato condemns such vice with a severity which differs from his attitude in the *Republic*, 468 C). But the Spartan constitution is moderate and mixed (691 E-692 A), even if the aim of the Spartan State and its ἦθος are wrong. So blended that it is hard to decide whether it is a tyranny, a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy, that constitution (unlike most constitutions, which merely represent the ascendency of a single section) is a real and genuine polity (712 A-B).

[1] One of the points made by M. Eisenmann, in *Le Compromis*, is that Austria-Hungary has always looked outwards, to a foreign policy of expansion, and has subordinated her internal policy (with fatal results) to the exigencies of this outward direction of her effort. This, he urges, is to invert the true order of development, which should proceed from within outwards.

which comes of moderation and self-control. So the military State, if it listens to Plato, will abjure the outward direction of its life, its one-sided virtue, its hopes of conquest and annihilation, and all its philosophy of a "natural state of war"; it will turn to the battle-ground within its borders, and learning the philosophy of peace it will seek, by ordering its inward polity on the principle of self-control, to secure that harmony and reconciliation of different elements which only self-control can give.

War, after all, is a disease of the body politic, and a State which embarks on a policy of war shows by that act that it is halt and imperfect. "No man can gain complete security from wrong, unless he has attained perfect goodness; and it is possible for States to have the same attribute, enjoying peace if they are good, and exposed to war, within and without, if they are evil" (829 A).[1] And as war springs from imperfection and evil in its beginnings, so too in its course, to Plato's thinking, it is a thing that brings little good. We may talk of the lessons of war, or the "great game of war"; but "the truth is that in the nature of war there never was, nor is, nor will be, either amusement or instruction (*οὔτε παιδιὰ οὔτε παιδεία*) to any degree worth considering" (803 D). Yet it would be a mistake to conclude from this analysis—an analysis, in effect, of the nature of offensive war—that Plato was a political quietist, or a believer in 'pacificism'. Aristotle, indeed (whose criticism of the *Laws* is somewhat external and imperfect), accuses Plato of neglecting the foreign relations of his State;[2] and he criticises his provision that the central city should have no fortifications, but should leave "walls to sleep in the ground".[3] But Plato, as a matter of fact, abundantly provides for the defence of his State and its central city. If his city has no walls, that is only because a walled city induces men to neglect the defence of their frontiers;[4] and he provides that the frontiers of his State shall be digged and trenched and fortified (778 E: 760 A-761 A). Not only so, but he demands national service, and he makes the right to a vote in civic elections depend on the discharge of such service. All the citizens, women as well as men, must take the field for at least one day in every month (829 B). Men train for athletic con-

[1] The principle which Plato here suggests is that enforced by T. H. Green in *The Principles of Political Obligation*, section K. See especially § 169, "It is not the State, as such, but this or that particular State, which by no means fulfils its purpose . . . that needs to defend its interests by actions injurious to those outside it"; and § 173, "The military system of Europe is no necessary incident of the relations between independent States, but arises from the fact that the organisation of State-life, even with those peoples that have been brought under its influence at all, is still so incomplete".

[2] *Politics*, II. 6, 7 (1265, a 18-28).

[3] *Ibid.* VII. II. §§ 8-11 (1330, b 32-1331, a 10).

[4] A First Sea Lord once advised Englishmen to trust the Navy, and sleep quietly in their beds. This is exactly what Plato wishes to prevent, and why he would have walls "sleep in the ground". "They lead men to imagine that they will find the way of safety, not through the continual keeping of watch and ward in the city by day and by night, but by shutting themselves inside walls and gates and sleeping in bed" (779 A).

tests; "and shall the warriors of our city be a whit worse prepared for the greatest of all contests, in which life and children and goods and the State are at stake?" (830 C).[1] War, provided it be *pro patriae tuitione*, finds ample recognition in the *Laws*. In the opening chapters of the very last book, in a passage which a German writer condemns for its militarism,[2] he lays down stringent rules of military discipline; and, after enacting penalties for malingerers, he enacts also, "for valour," the award of a crown of wild olive, which the winner may offer to the temple of any of the gods of war (942 A-945 B).

The Nature of Law

Such is Plato's conception, in the *Laws*, of what the State should be, and should not be; of the errors it should avoid, and the ideal it should pursue. That ideal it is the aim of law to express. Of the nature of law—of its necessity, its origin, its extent and its sovereignty—Plato has much, and much that is profoundly wise, to say; and indeed a treatise *de l'esprit des lois* might be written on the texts which occur in the *Laws*.

On the necessity of law there is a noble passage in the ninth book (875), which in form is a preface to the law on the infliction of wounds. Law is civilisation: it is the slow-bought gain of the ages during which men have striven to lift themselves above savage beasts: it is the differentia of humanity.[3] It is necessary to us for two reasons—first, because our individual minds are not adequate in themselves for the recognition of what is best for social life; secondly because, even when such recognition is attained, our individual wills are not always able or willing to pursue the best. We thus need law, first of all, to precipitate, as it were, and to crystallise the good, for which our consciences darkly grope. The good we seek is a common good, and because it is a common good it binds us together in a society for its common pursuit; and in such a society, joined in the pursuit of a common good, but in such a society only, each individual can attain the good of his own life. It is difficult for men to recognise these facts, or to realise that the common good is the prior condition of any individual good; and that is why the true art of legislation, which far more than tools or any crafts makes civilisation, is a necessity of human life. Again we need law, and the public enforcement of law, to supply a motive to our lagging wills. Without the organisation

[1] Plato would banish athletic contests, other than those of a martial quality (832 E), and substitute the drill-ground for the football-field.

[2] Gomperz (a Viennese professor), in *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. III, p. 262, of the English Translation. The condemnation is the more curious as it is based on a hasty and erroneous reading. What Plato says is that, as far as military service is concerned, the strictest discipline must be maintained in peace as well as in war. What Gomperz makes this mean is that "military discipline is held up as a model for the whole of civic life"; and on that text he grows eloquent.

[3] *Cf.* 937 E: *δίκη . . . πάντα ἡμέρωκε τὰ ἀνθρώπινα.*

of a common opinion, backed by a common force, men will always seek, even if they have an intellectual recognition of the common good, to establish a private interest as their canon (*ἰδιοπραγία*), and they will always drift into selfish competition for the sake of private advantage (*πλεονεξία*). If, indeed, by the grace of God, a man should arise among his people naturally able to recognise, and also, of his own motion, to pursue the good, such a man would need no laws for his guidance. There is no law or order greater than wisdom; and genuine free mind is in its nature always sovereign and never subject. But this is a dream—the dream of a god among men. There is no such mind anywhere, or at any rate only a little; and so we must take law and order, admitting as we do that they are only a second best, and that though law may envisage rules of a general application, it cannot (as might a free sovereign mind) meet every case and every need.

But if law is not free mind, it is the expression of mind or reason; and if it does not cover every case, it has an almost universal extent. More than once Plato connects the word "law" (*νόμος*) with the word "mind" (*νοῦς*), implying that the one is derived from the other, and that since, as he holds, the word and the thing are intimately united, there is a deep significance in the derivation.[1] Men are as puppets pulled in opposite ways by the many strings of desire; but there is also "a sacred and golden cord of Reason, which is called the common law of the State, to which we should always cling, and which we should never let go" (644 E-645 D). Because it is thus one with reason, law extends over the whole of life (631-632). It regulates birth: it arranges marriage: it rules even in death, for the very dead must be buried according to law. It deals with every passion and affection of life: it makes definitions, and by the honour and dishonour it awards it teaches men to follow its definitions, of the right and wrong of every feeling that can arise in human intercourse. And as it covers the whole space of man's life, as it deals with every spiritual affection of his nature, so too it deals with all material interests: it regulates property and every nexus between man and man that springs from property. There are, indeed, some matters about which written law is necessarily silent (788 A-B). They are little things, not always apparent, concerned with private family life, which, if brought within its sphere, would only destroy the written law, because, in such small things, men readily form the habit of law-breaking. Even here, however, law may still find a place, in the form of unwritten custom and the shape of a *mos majorum* (793). Custom is a mortar which fills the interstices of the law; or it may be likened,

[1] *Cf.* 714 A, *τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομὴν ἐπονομάζοντας νόμον*, and 957 C. *Cf.* also, for Plato's conception of the relation of the signifying word to the thing signified, the *Cratylus*, 434 A, *τὸ ὄνομα ὅμοιον τῷ πράγματι*, and 435 D, *ὃς ἂν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπίστηται, ἐπίστασθαι καὶ τὰ πράγματα.*

again, to the props of the builder—it supplements and supports the structure of law which without it would crumble and fall. The legislator, if his primary concern is with law, cannot neglect customs and manners and habits. Law is bound up with them, and they with law: nor "must we wonder, if many little things generally accounted to be customs and habits come pouring in and lengthening out our laws". Much, it is true, will depend on the courts by which law is administered (876). When a State has good courts, much may be left to their good sense. Where they are bad—and here Plato apparently refers to popular courts such as those of Athens—"the legislator must lay down the law expressly in almost every case".[1]

Of the origin of law, and its making, Plato has also much to say. It is the hypothesis of the whole dialogue that the making of law rests with a legislator. In one passage, in which he is dealing with the growth of early societies, he suggests that the conflict of the customs of different families, when they came to settle together, involved the need of a legislator for the purpose of comparing the different customs and selecting the best for adoption (681). This is a true saying; and many historical instances go to show that the making of a code has often sprung from the settlement in the same territory of peoples with different customs.[2] In another passage, in which he is concerned with the antecedent conditions necessary for the foundation of his colony, Plato falls into doubts about the legislator's power (709). Perhaps man never legislates, and chance and nature make all our laws. The effects of war, the influence of economic conditions, pestilence, famine—these, it would seem, are our legislators. But there is, he suggests, another and a truer view. God governs all things: in the domain of human affairs chance and opportunity co-operate; and in this domain, too, art is also of the company. But the art of the legislator, like all other arts, needs chance and opportunity. It needs a social system in which it can play freely: it needs some political force which will give its creations ready effect and an assured root. The Code Napoleon was planted in a society which had been trenched and digged by the French Revolution; the force of Napoleon gave it shelter. In something of this sense, and from something of this point of view, Plato desires that the day of the legislator should coincide with the day of the young tyrant, who by his power, and by the example which he sets, may ensure the due conjuncture of art with chance and opportunity.

The sovereignty of law, when once a State has been equipped with a code, is one of the cardinal principles of the *Laws* (712 E-715 E). The law-state must be the reverse of the actual States of Greece;

[1] Plato is chiefly speaking of the determination of penalties by the courts.

[2] The Code of Alfred, for instance, is connected with the Danish settlement in England. *Cf.* Jenks, *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages*, p. 11.

it must adjust its government to the law, as the servant of a sovereign law, and not its law to the government, as the tool of a sovereign government. Contemporary States, Plato argues, recalling the doctrine of the 'two States' which he had propounded in the *Republic*,[1] are not really States: "they are places of habitation in which we may see cities that are the subjects and slaves of a part of themselves, and where each is named according to the nature of the part that is master". Democracy, for example, is not a State: it is an aggregate of men, divided into two parts (the well-to-do and the Demos), one of which dominates the other and gives its particular name to the general aggregate. Here there is no constitution (πολιτεία), but rather a clique (στασιωτεία)—no polity, but rather a party: democracy simply means the rule of a faction. Treating itself as the whole, the faction enacts as law everything which it regards as calculated to promote its own interest. "They say that the law ought not to look to goodness, but to the interest of the established form of government." This is simply the thesis of Thrasymachus, "Justice is the interest of the strongest," or, in other words, "Law is simply the interest of the predominant class in a State". In the law-state everything must follow the opposite order. Law must come first, as sole and supreme sovereign, and government must be constructed in the interest of law. But law is one and the same for all, and in the interest of all; and it follows that the government which is constructed in its interest must also be constructed in the interest of all. On this basis a State will live and prosper: on the other basis it will wither and die. And if, Plato adds, we wish to call such a State after the name of the force which predominates in its life, we shall call it by the name of God, and name it theocracy; for the force which predominates is the reason which is in the law, and reason is from God.[2]

It is natural that Plato, believing in the sovereignty of law, should also believe in its rigidity. He thinks of a fundamental law, to which rulers should conform in their actions and subjects should be habituated in their lives. This was a current Greek principle; but it is a principle which Plato carries far in the *Laws*. He admits, indeed, that his code of laws, like a picture, may need retouching; and he suggests that the guardians of the law may not only be its servants, but, when it is necessary, and provided that they act in its spirit, may also be its reformers. But this power is apparently only to last for the first few years after the foundation of the colony; and after that time "there shall be no more change," unless, indeed, there is necessity, and unless all the magistrates and all the people,

[1] *Cf. Rep.*, 422 E., 551 D.

[2] Plato, repeating a passage in the *Politicus*, speaks of theocracy as the form of government of the golden age of Cronus. It is gone from the earth, but we must imitate it still, obeying what there is in us of immortality, and regulating our cities according to law, which is one with mind or reason, the immortal and divine element of our being (713 E-714 A).

with the consent of all the oracles of the gods, agree to make a change (769-773).[1] In the sphere of laws relating to education, as we shall see, this tendency to insist on a rigid law is especially marked; and more than once Plato refers to Egyptian immobility as the ideal to be followed (656 D-E: 799 A-B).

There is, however, one aspect of Plato's treatment of law which goes far to qualify the impression of rigidity which many passages suggest. This aspect appears in his advocacy of prefaces or preambles (718 A-724 B). Before all his laws, as they occur, the legislator should in each case affix a preamble (προοίμιον), enunciating the principles on which they are based, and persuading the citizens to accept their commands by showing that they are the logical result of principles in which they believe. The reasons which underlie this advocacy of preambles are various. In the first place, preambles may be viewed as corollaries of that principle of self-control which inspires the argument of the *Laws*. It is true that law is the expression of reason, and that, since reason is sovereign, law should take the form of a sovereign command. But law is also the organ through which the perfect virtue of self-control is realised; and self-control is a harmony between reason and appetite. It is the aim of the preamble to achieve such a harmony, and by adding persuasion to command to make appetite accord with reason. Further, the combination of persuasive preamble and imperative law corresponds to, and prepares the way for, the scheme of government which Plato advocates. It finds its political parallel in the mixed constitution, in which the democratic principle of liberty is blended with the monarchical principle of order. In these preambles, explaining and justifying the laws which they precede, we may trace some counterpart of the function, which parliament and the platform play to-day in enabling a ministry to explain and justify the policy of a legislative scheme. But we shall perhaps come nearest to Plato's own mind if we conceive these preambles as the bridge by which he passes from the rule of the trained philosophic mind to the rule of law. They represent the principles which would have inspired the ideal ruler untrammeled by law; the law, as far as its power can reach, represents the detailed application of these principles which such a ruler would have made. Taken together, the two are the nearest possible approach to philosophic monarchy. It is not the rule of bare law which Plato advocates: it is the rule of a law which trails a cloud of glory, and recalls the philosophic home from which it has come. Through the preamble Plato can reconcile himself to the law-state: without it, we may fancy,

[1] It is not clear whether Plato means this provision to relate to the whole body of law, or only to laws concerning dances and sacrifices (see C. Ritter's commentary on the *Laws ad locum* (772 B-C), pp. 170-1). In the twelfth book, which, as has been said, seems to be a postscript, the nocturnal council is said to be composed of those who have supervision of the laws (ἐποπτεύοντες τοὺς νόμους); but it is not clear, though it seems to be implied, that it has a power of revision (951 E-952 A: *cf.* 962 B).

the law-state might have been, in his view, intolerably arid, and it might have seemed to him no better than the old law, without the righteousness of faith, seemed to St. Paul.

The idea of preambles does not occur in an isolated passage; it runs through the whole of the *Laws*, and some of the finest passages in the dialogue take the forms of preambles. The passage in which Plato seeks to prove the necessity of law is a preamble to a branch of his criminal code: the lofty argument of the tenth book, in which he states a religious creed, is a preamble to the law of heresy. The suggestion is seriously and practically made: Plato, as we have seen, had worked with the younger Dionysius at the study of preambles; and he obviously hoped, by this change in the form and style of legislation, to produce a real change in the actual attitude of the ordinary citizen to law. His advocacy of these preambles shows the strong feeling, which must always be present to the philosophic mind, of the value of a knowledge of the *raison d'être* of any claim to allegiance and any assertion of obligation. "If men but knew," such a mind may argue, "the why and the wherefore of these things, obedience would cease to be a matter of grudging conformity, and obligation would be cheerfully accepted, because it was understood". It may be that the philosophic mind generalises too rapidly, and extends to ordinary men a truth which is only true of itself. Plato believes in the value of epitomised philosophy as a persuasive influence; but would epitomised philosophy succeed, where philosophy unabridged is too often ineffective? Ordinary humanity prefers punishment without a precedent sermon; nor is it as much touched by reason and argument, as the philosopher such as Plato (or again Mill, in his *Essay on Liberty*) is ready to believe. It is a further difficulty, which the lawyer may raise, that the introduction of philosophic preambles may tend to a confusion of moral philosophy with jurisprudence; and Plato himself may sometimes seem to fall into such a confusion. Yet it is interesting to notice that Bentham, who, if any man, had a legal mind, was also an advocate of preambles. When he offered in 1817 to provide the United States of America with a legal code, he offered to add "an accompaniment of reasons . . . derived from the principle of general utility".[1] The United States turned a deaf ear; and a code accompanied by philosophic preambles is still an unrealised dream.

The general conception of law which appears in the *Laws* is a

[1] See Bowring's edition of *Bentham's Works*, IV. pp. 491-4. The argument is contained in the fifth of the letters sent by "Jeremy Bentham, an Englishman, to the citizens of the United States". The letter is entitled, "Of Justifiedness as applied to a Body of Law". The central argument is "that no mass of the matter of law is what it might be, and therefore ought to be, otherwise than in so far as, throughout the whole extent of it, it is furnished with a correspondent *body of reasons*, for its accompaniment and support". The whole argument is well worth reading by a student of the *Laws*.

conception which, in its general lines, is faithful to the ideas of the Greek city-states, and as such it is largely reproduced by Aristotle. It is a conception wider than ours, in that it makes law regulate the whole of moral life. Plato makes little if any distinction between morality and legality: if there are things which law refrains from enacting, they are only the little things about which it would be unwise to legislate, because it would be impossible to secure obedience. To-day we draw such a distinction; and the law of the modern world is confined to the duty of enunciating a legal scheme of rights and duties, within which free moral action may proceed of its own accord.[1] Because it is wider, Plato's conception is also, in one sense, higher than ours. It demands that law should be enforced, not only by punishment and the secular arm, but also by education and the appeal of mind to mind. Law is not so much, to Plato or to Aristotle, a force acting on the individual from without, as it is a spirit which he must be trained to draw into his inward being. This is the meaning of education. It is the drawing and training of youth towards that right reason which the law affirms (659 D). It is what makes man covet and love a perfect citizenship (643 E). It is that right habituation, through suitable habits, of the affections of the young—pleasure and friendship, hatred and pain—which makes their minds, when reason comes, already so attuned to her music, that by habit, as well as by reason, they love what they should love, and by habit, as well as by reason, they hate what they should hate (653 B-C). This is that theory of habituation which Aristotle taught in the *Ethics*. It is also the foundation of the system of education which Plato constructs in the *Laws*. For there were two things which the *Laws* gave to the world, and two influences which it exercised on future generations. One of these things is a code of law; and the influence which that code exercised sank deep into the law of the Hellenistic world, and, through it, into the law of Rome. The other is a curriculum of education—not, as in the *Republic* for the University, but rather for the secondary school; and the influence which that curriculum exercised is perhaps no less far-reaching.

The Lessons of History

Before he proceeds to construct a State on the basis of these principles, Plato turns to the past, and in the third book of the *Laws* he passes in review the lessons of history. This appeal to history, which stands in contrast with the logical method on which the construction of the *Republic* is based, indicates the more realistic temper of the *Laws*. At the same time it must be confessed that Plato's use of history is Platonic; and it would be impossible to find anything

[1] Bentham had some idea of formulating a moral code, distinct from, but supplementing, the legal code. The study of such a code he called Deontology (*cf.* Graham, *English Political Philosophy*, pp. 207 *sqq.*).

in the actual history of Greece to correspond to much in his account of its past. He uses history as he uses myth, to suit his argument; and where actual history does not provide an argument, he makes a version of history which does, altering and adding to the facts at will.[1] The contrast with the *Republic* is more apparent than real; and the basis of the *Laws* is Platonic philosophy, even if it is couched in the guise of Platonic history.

The sketch of history begins with the Deluge, and is concerned with the cycle of human affairs in which men are at present living.[2] The few survivors who escaped destruction lived on the tops of the hills, to which primitive man would naturally cling for safety. They lived on a pastoral State, very like the city of swine of the *Republic*: they were ignorant of much that is good, but also of much that is bad, in civilised life; and, if imperfect, they were nevertheless blessed, in the absence alike of poverty and of wealth, and in the simplicity of their hearts. The dream of a golden "state of nature," and the facts of civilised and political life, seem in this picture to strive for the mastery; and Plato appears uncertain which to prefer.[3] But he admits that men refused to be content in the paradise of the hills. From the hilltops they next descended to the plains at the foot of the hills: from pasture they turned to agriculture. They had been living in patriarchal families on the tops of the hills (680 E): the closer society which agricultural life involved brought these families into contact. The customs of one patriarchal family were seen not to be as those of another; a legislator was appointed to select the best customs, and the heads of the families formed themselves into a government to maintain the selection. In the stress here laid upon the patriarchal family, and in the view of law as a codification of custom, Plato is on firm historical ground. From the tribal society he next turns to the civic. A third era is marked by the building of Troy in the plain, away from the hills. The mention of Troy suggests its siege: its siege suggests heroic Greece; and so the progress is made to the fourth and final stage, which is the period of the three Dorian kingdoms, Sparta, Argos, and Messene. By an historic consideration of these three Plato attempts to decide "what is well or ill settled, and what laws are the salvation and what are the destruction of cities, and what changes would make a State happy" (683 B);

[1] Plato does not stand alone in this free use of history. The Attic orators pay scant respect to historic fact in their appeals to history. We have to remember that history was not a subject of instruction in Greek education, and that the history of Greece before the fifth century was dependent on a variable tradition composed of myth and legend.

[2] Plato also refers to the Deluge—which was a Greek as well as a Hebrew (or Babylonian) tradition—in the *Critias* and the *Timæus*. In the *Politicus* he speaks of cycles, though he explains these cycles in a different way. "The idea of an infinite past, and of great cycles of time, which took such hold of Plato's imagination . . . was common to him with the Pythagoreans . . . if not derived from them" (Campbell, introduction to *Politicus*, xxii).

[3] *Cf. supra*, p. 166 n. 2.

and it is thus from a consideration of the early history of the States of the Peloponnese that he seeks to derive a justification for his theory of the rule of law and the mixed constitution.

In each of the three Dorian Kingdoms the king and the people took oaths in accordance with the common laws regulating rulers and subjects alike; the king swore never to make his rule more arbitrary; the people swore that, so long as the king observed his oath, they would never subvert the monarchy.[1] The king and people in each State were also united to the kings and peoples of the other two in a definite alliance and understanding: each king was to help the other kings and peoples when they suffered injustice; and each people, in like manner, was to help the other peoples and kings in the like event. Each State was thus in a sense mixed: in each there was a combination of monarchical power and popular right; and in each the stability of this system might seem assured by the help of the rest. Each again offered a free field for the action of the legislator: the three peoples and their kings had newly entered the territories they occupied, and there were no vested interests or inherited prejudices to hinder his work (684). But in spite of these oaths, and this alliance, and this free field of action, the legislators of two of the Dorian States failed to achieve success. The alliance proved no alliance; and the cause of its collapse was the unmixed character of the royal power, which, if limited by oaths, was not checked or balanced by any other authority, and which made each sovereign anxious to act on his own behalf, and disinclined to co-operate with the rest. The Kings of Argos and Messene proved unfaithful to their allies, and unfaithful to their peoples and their oaths. They infringed the rights of their peoples: they violated their oaths:

[1] Here Plato anticipates the doctrine of the social contract, or rather, to speak more exactly, of the governmental contract. The social contract, properly speaking, is a contract of each with all, instituting a State in the sense of a political society (*pacte d'association*): the governmental contract is a contract of a king or magistracy with such a society, instituting a State in the sense of a government (*pacte de gouvernement*). It is the latter of which Plato writes. One may cite, in illustration of what he says, the form of words supposed to have been used by the barons of Aragon at the coronation of their king: "We, who are as good as you are, choose you for our king and lord, provided that you observe our rules and privileges: and if not, not". Not only in Aragon, but at the coronation of all mediæval kings, there was a mutual exchange of oaths—the coronation oath of the king, and the oath of fealty of his vassals; and this mutual exchange of oaths was one of the grounds of the theory of a compact between king and people. It has already been noticed that in the *Crito* Plato speaks of a contract between each citizen and the laws of his city, and that in the *Protagoras* he implies, or makes Protagoras imply, something like a social contract in the proper sense of the term. There is a description in the *Critias*—in one of the most romantic passages of that romantic fragment (119 C-120 D)—of the confederacy of the ten kings of Atlantis, which is not unlike the description in the *Laws* of the confederacy of the three Dorian kings. But there is no mention in the *Critias* of any participation of the people: the ten kings are bound by the "writings" of the god Poseidon, and not by any agreement with their peoples, and while they are to help one another, if the power of any one of them is threatened, nothing is said of their peoples helping one another if their liberty is menaced.

they broke the laws. The fault was the fault of the legislators. They may have made laws for the sake of war, with a view to the one virtue of courage: they had not made laws for the sake of peace, with a view to the sovereign virtue of self-control. Destitute of self-control, the kings of Argos and Messene became also destitute of wisdom, which cannot be kept without self-control; and destitute of wisdom, they ruined the States entrusted to their charge. It was a further error of the legislator that he gave all power into the hands of one man. As soon as the mean is abandoned, and anything is given more than it can bear—a ship more sail, a body more meat, a mind more power—it means ultimate shipwreck (691 C). Sparta was saved, where Argos and Messene perished, because she acted on this rule. Her laws, like theirs, had their defects; but her monarchy was never absolute. It was checked from the first by the existence of a dual kingship: it was balanced, as time went on, by the rise of the concurrent authorities of Senate and Ephors. The lesson of history, therefore, so far as history has any lessons to teach, is that a mixed and balanced constitution may succeed where an unmixed constitution fails. This is the moral to be drawn from the different fortunes of the three Dorian States; and Sparta is the model to be followed by the legislator who wishes his State to enjoy stability.

But there are other States than those of the Peloponnesus to be considered; and there is history more recent than that of the Dorian migration and its sequel to be studied. There is Persia, the type of absolute monarchy: there is Athens, the model of popular self-government. These are the two primary types and mother forms of States, of which all others are varieties; but neither of them is perfect unless it is mixed with the other (693 C-701 C). Pure and unmixed monarchy, already condemned by the history of ancient Greece, is further condemned in Plato's eyes by the example of contemporary Persia. There was indeed a time in the history of Persia, under Cyrus and again under Darius, when the liberty of the people was combined with the sagacity of the monarch, and the king was wise enough to consult with any of his subjects who could give him wise advice. But wisdom—the title which the monarch pleads—was not long justified of the Persian kings. Born in the purple, and never schooled in self-control, the kings who succeeded to the two great founders of the Persian monarchy were unwise, because they lacked the virtue which is the key of wisdom. Being unwise, they no longer governed in the interest of their subjects, but for the gratification of their own desires; and governing after this manner, they deprived their State at once of liberty and of any bond of unity. Without wisdom in her rulers, or liberty in her subjects, or unity in herself, Persia lacked all the three things which make a true State (p. 298); and her kings, lacking self-control, lacked the one and only thing which

in itself can ever be a title to political power. But pure and unmixed democracy stands equally condemned with absolute monarchy, as the history of Athens, in Plato's interpretation, goes to show. Here again, it is true, there was a time when the predominant element was mixed with others of a different strain, and the liberty of the people was held to be compatible with a spirit of reverent obedience to law and a graded system of social classes based on a property qualification. These were the days of that ancient constitution under which Athens, united as one man in the hour of peril, faced and beat the power of Persia. But here too corruption ensued; and Athenian democracy, like Persian monarchy, lost self-control, and the gifts which self-control alone can give. Art became lawless: poets introduced vulgar innovations in defiance of its canons, and pleaded that the true test of art is the pleasure it affords. The people readily learned the lesson which they were thus taught,[1] and they affirmed that the true test of art was the pleasure it afforded *them.*[2] They began to sit in judgment on music and drama; and rejecting the idea of canons of art, they established a noisy "theatrocracy," under which their favour or disfavour became the only rule.[3] It was an easy step to reject political authority and the laws of social life, and to erect an extreme democracy in which the popular will become the only canon of right and wrong, and the sovereignty of the law made way for the sovereignty of the pleasure of the people. With the passing of the sovereignty of the law, there soon vanished all regard for plighted word and solemn obligation, and all belief in God; and men, like the Titans of old, rose in insurrection against the Highest.[4]

[1] Plato is contending, as it were, that not Socrates, but Euripides, ruined Athenian democracy. The stress which he lays on the corruption of art as the cause of political decadence is due to his view of education. Education is habituation in the spirit of the laws, by which citizens are made law-abiding and States are made stable. The great means of education is 'music,' in the full sense of that word, which includes poetry and art. If music conforms to fixed canons, which themselves conform to the spirit of the laws, education can do its work. If license invades music, the work of education ceases, and the spiritual basis of law collapses.

[2] "Thus far I too should agree with the many, that music ought to be judged by the pleasure it gives. But the pleasure should not be the pleasure of any and everybody; the fairest muse is the one that delights the best and the most educated" (659 A).

[3] "The Athenian audience," it has been said, "was closely attentive, and highly demonstrative." But the actual work of judging the competing plays at the great Dionysia, and the awarding of the prizes, rested with ten judges chosen by lot from a list of persons selected by the council and the choregi who furnished the choruses for the plays. Such judges, however, might, as Plato suggests (659 B), be deafened by popular clamour into deciding according to the instructions of the audience.

Plato's criticism of θεατροκρατία is met and traversed by Aristotle in the *Politics*, III. 11, § 3 (1281, b 7-10)—"The many are better judges (than the few) of musical compositions and works of poetry. Some may perceive one aspect, and some another: all perceive all." While Plato condemns θεατροκρατία and the δημοκρατία in which it issues, Aristotle tries to find the element of truth in both (*cf. supra*, p. 228 n. 1).

[4] Plato recognises in the *Laws*, what he hardly recognised in the *Republic*, that the principle of liberty, which underlies democracy, is one which must find its place in the constitution of the State. But his picture of extreme democracy in this passage is still as unfavourable as that in the eighth book of the *Republic* (*cf. supra*, pp. 256-7).

Plato admits, in spite of these grave indictments, that while both monarchy and democracy, taken by themselves, have their defects, either has also the qualities of its defects. Liberty is the blessing of democracy, if ignorance which pretends to be knowledge is also its curse; monarchy may tend to destroy liberty, but it suggests, if it does not always in practice mean, the rule of wisdom. Combine the qualities of both—secure wisdom in the ruler and guarantee liberty to the ruled—and you will find that fraternity too will follow. But liberty, wisdom, fraternity, these are the three things which a State must seek; and if they can be found in a combination of monarchy and democracy, that is the form of State to be sought. And so, instead of turning kings into philosophers, and rejecting or neglecting peoples, Plato attempts, as practical statesmen have often attempted, to reconcile the cause of monarchy with the cause of popular government. In the light of our own experience it is easy to suggest that such a reconciliation may best be found in a constitutional monarchy, limited by a house of representatives. But Plato, though he may anticipate the principles, can hardly be expected to anticipate the practice of the English Constitution. He had neither the modern conception, which is a legacy from feudal days, of a monarch content to receive the allegiance of his subjects without conducting the actual work of government, nor the modern idea that popular rights may best be secured by the indirect means of representation. In the issue, accordingly, his solution proves to be something like a moderate oligarchy, in which monarchy is diluted by being divided among a number of magistrates, and democracy means little, if anything, more than the right of a primary assembly to elect those magistrates.

But it marks a new stage in the development of Plato's thought that he should have recognised the principle of liberty, even in a limited form, and should have admitted that consent, as well as knowledge, is after all the basis of government. He is no longer the absolutist that he was when he wrote the *Republic*; and he has changed the view that he held when he wrote the *Politicus*. In the *Republic* he had left the principle of consent unconsidered and unmentioned: in the *Politicus* he had insisted that the need of consent, like the rule of law, was an unnecessary trammel on the freedom of the "statesman".[1] In the *Laws* he is less concerned with the freedom of the ruler's action, and more concerned with the freedom of the subject's life. Just as, in adopting the rule of law, he already pays homage to the principle of consent in the form of persuasive preambles, so too, in adapting the mixed constitution, he accepts that principle as the basis of administration. It is the logical outcome of the virtue of self-control, or harmony of reason and appetite, on

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 278 n. 1, where it is noted that the view of the *Politicus* about the principle of consent is not absolutely clear.

which the *Laws* is based, just as absolutism is the logical outcome of the virtue of justice, or separation of faculty and function, on which the *Republic* is based. Plato may still cling to absolutism, and still believe in the sovereignty of genuine free mind, but he recognises that "there is no such mind anywhere, or at any rate only a little" (875); and while he may still place some slight hope in a young tyrant, he is clear that the young tyrant must be associated with a legislator, and only belongs to the first inception of a State (709-713). Instead of urging, as he had done in the *Politicus*, that the presence of wisdom, and not the presence of consent, is the only test of a true State, he can now maintain that the test of a constitution is voluntary rule of voluntary subjects, without which a constitution is only a legalised form of anarchy (832 C). The changed use which he makes of the analogy of the physician shows the change in his thought. In the *Politicus* he had argued that the physician did not require the consent of his patient; why should the statesman need the consent of his subjects? In a passage in the *Laws*, in which the value of preambles is demonstrated (720 B-D), we learn that it is only the slave doctor who gives his orders like a tyrant: the physician who attends a freeman enters into communication with his patient, and after instructing him to the best of his ability only gives a prescription when he has convinced him of its value and its necessity. Plato, if he is still a physician of States, has become a wise family doctor instead of a brusque consulting physician. He has a deeper knowledge of human nature: the lessons which he professes to derive from history in the third book of the *Laws* are really derived from the history of his own life. He knows from his experience that when the patient is convinced of the value of a treatment, the treatment is more likely to be successful; and, as we shall see when we come to consider his attitude in the *Laws* to private property and family life, he can admit (while still believing that the ideal life is one of communism) that property and the private family are the natural regimen for humanity at large.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE *LAWS*

Geography and Population

IT is by the foundation of an imaginary colony that Plato seeks to sketch the lines of the law-state and its mixed constitution. The greater part of the island of Crete, in which the scene of the dialogue is laid, is about to found a colony; and the Cretan Cleinias, who is one of the persons of the dialogue, is also one of a commission of ten which has been appointed to superintend its foundation (702 C). The commission has power to make the laws of the colony; and Cleinias begs the Athenian stranger to propound for its consideration a draft or sketch of a code and a constitution.[1] The case here imagined was one that often occurred in actual Greek life; and it indicates both the impulse which colonisation furnished to political speculation, and the part which such speculation might play in the construction of new States. Modern colonists are apt to carry with them the laws and institutions of some one mother-country from which they have come, and to which they remain attached.[2] Greek colonies, as a rule, began a new and independent life on their

[1] Strictly speaking, the *Laws* does not contain the actual plan and specification for the colony, but a rough drawing, which, when the colony is actually founded, may be used as a basis, but modified. This appears, *e.g.* in 737 D: "When we have seen the country and the neighbourhood, we will determine the size of the territory and the number of the population actually and in regular form (ἔργῳ καὶ λόγοις); but for the present the argument may advance to (proposals of) legislation (to be considered by the commission) for the sake of obtaining a sketch and an outline (σχήματος ἕνεκα καὶ ὑπογραφῆς)". But Plato hardly adheres to this distinction; and much of the *Laws* is not really in the nature of a rough drawing, but rather in the form of a final plan and specification. This raises difficulties of interpretation, which have exercised German critics: see C. Ritter's commentary on the *Laws*, pp. 140-7. It seems the simplest interpretation to hold that Plato (very naturally, if somewhat inconsistently) alternates between the two views.

[2] Yet even in modern times colonies have offered a ground for constitutional experiments and attempts at the realisation of an ideal. The fundamental constitutions of the Carolinas (never, it is true, enacted by the colonists, or possessed of legal force in the colonies) were the work of the philosopher Locke. There is something Platonic not only in the scheme, but in its details. "To prevent the multiplication of laws all statutes were to become repealed at the end of one hundred years by efflux of time, and all manner of comment on or exposition of the Fundamental Constitutions was strictly forbidden" (Egerton, *Origin and Growth of English Colonies*, p. 78).

own account: their population was sometimes, if not always, drawn from different sources and stocks which had been accustomed, in their original homes, to different laws and institutions; and it was natural that they should begin their life with an effort to find some new code of law and some new form of constitution in which their differences might be reconciled.[1] Plato sees that there may be advantages in colonists of a single stock, who possess from the start community of race, of language, of law, and of religion (708 C).[2] On the other hand, united as they are, they are prone to cling blindly to the laws and institutions of their original home; and colonists drawn from different stocks, though they may find it hard to pull together, will be more likely to accept new laws and institutions. Accordingly the colonists of the imaginary colony are to be drawn not only from the whole of Crete, but also from the Peloponnese (708 C); and the commission is to have power to adopt laws not only on the Cretan model, but also on foreign models if it considers that they are better (702 C).[3] The colony will thus be like the confluence of springs from many sources into a single lake (736 B), and the legislator will be able to require that the waters shall all be pure, and the colonists shall all be good material.

As the founder of a colony, who starts with a clean slate, the legislator will not be compelled to provide for any preliminary purgation of his State, nor need he begin by putting to death or sending into exile the elements which cannot be woven into the texture of his State (735).[4] He is in the happy position of the Dorian States at the beginning of their history: he is free from vested interests and inherited prejudices. He is, indeed, in an even happier position. He can choose the site of his colony, and determine freely the geographical conditions under which his State shall start its life. Plato is well aware of what we should call the effects of climate on national character. Soil and atmosphere influence the mind and temper of

[1] Athens, for instance, founded at Thurii, in 443-4, a famous colony which was panhellenic in its origin. Protagoras of Samos was its legislator: Hippodamus of Miletus, whom Aristotle mentions in the second book of the *Politics*, was its architect, and designed the plan of its buildings: Empedocles of Agrigentum was one of its early members, and it was also joined by the historian Herodotus, who came from Halicarnassus. Thurii was thus a great meeting ground, and its colonists were a mixed body. Though Athenian in origin, it contained from the first a large Dorian element, which ultimately became predominant.

[2] *Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἕν τι εἶναι γένος ὁμόφωνον καὶ ὁμόνομον ἔχει τινὰ φιλίαν, κοινωνὸν ἱερῶν ὂν καὶ τῶν τοιούτων πάντων.* The phrase is very like the often-quoted passage in which Herodotus describes the unity of Greece (VIII. 144); *cf. supra*, p. 266.

[3] Plato here gives himself in advance a free hand for the codification of Greek law in general.

[4] The passage, both in its reference to weaving and its suggestion of preliminary purgation, is parallel to the *Politicus*, 308 C-309 A. A colony, Plato adds, may itself be regarded, from the point of view of the mother-city, as a method of purgation, which carries away into exile the pauperised class that menaces property and the constitution (735 E-736 A).

a people (747 E); they are things which the legislator must bear in mind when he comes to frame his laws.[1] The one geographical condition on which Plato specially insists (and here he is partly followed and partly criticised by Aristotle in the *Politics*), is that the colony should not be situated close to the sea (704-707). Here he is contradicting, and contradicting deliberately, the general practice of Greece. The Greeks were a sea-faring people whose high-road was the "wet ways" of the sea; and their colonies were almost always founded on its shores. Plato would have his colony set inland, and he would keep it, as far as might be, aloof from the great high-road. He would have it self-supporting, so that it needs no imports: he would have it produce no more than it needs, so that it has nothing to export: he would have it deficient in timber, so that it cannot turn to ship-building. A maritime position, he believes, corrupts a State. "The sea is pleasant enough to a country as daily company: but it is in reality, and in a high degree, a salt and sour neighbour. It fills a country with merchandise and money-making and bargaining: it breeds in men's minds habits of double-dealing and faithlessness: it makes the State faithless and friendless, alike in its own inner life, and in its relations with others" (705 A). So far, the condemnation of the maritime State is in essence a condemnation of the commercial State. But the maritime State also tends to become a naval power; and Plato condemns a naval power no less than he condemns the commercial State. The Athenian stranger has criticised the laws of Sparta and Crete for their militarism: he feels himself bound in justice also to criticise the practice of his own State for the same reason.[2] Militarism at sea may indeed be regarded as worse than militarism on land. Naval tactics, which involve sudden landings and sudden retreats, sap a soldierly temper; and honours in a naval State, which may owe its preservation to the mechanical skill of its

[1] Montesquieu, who has much to say of the effects of climate on laws, connects the freedom of English institutions with the defects of the English climate. *Cf.* Book XIV, c. 13, of *L'Esprit des Lois* (which is headed, Les effects qui résultent du climat d'Angleterre): "Dans une nation à qui une maladie du climat affecte tellement l'ame, qu'elle pourroit porter le dégoût de toutes choses jusqu'à celui de la vie, on voit bien que le gouvernement qui conviendroit le mieux à des gens à qui tout seroit insupportable, seroit celui où ils ne se pourroient se prendre à un seul de ce qui causeroit leurs chagrins; et où les lois gouvernant plutôt que les hommes, il faudroit, pour changer l'état, les renverser elles-memes". That is to say, the mixed constitution and the rule of law, which Montesquieu, like Plato, advocates, are due to a bad climate.

It may be noticed that Plato's interest in geography extends to geology. The description in the *Critias* of primitive Attica, and the effects of the action of the water, through nine thousand years, on its coast and its contour, might almost be written by a modern geologist (110 A-D).

[2] Plato is obviously referring to Athens. Athens, like modern England, did not produce her own food supply. She imported corn, largely from the Black Sea, by way of the Dardanelles, and exported in return partly her olives, and partly manufactured goods such as pottery. Athens, again, like England, was also the great naval power of Greece. Plato's criticism, which is a criticism of Athens, is also, just for that reason, a criticism of England; and indeed his views about militarism at sea have been echoed recently by enemy critics of English "navalism".

naval forces, are not awarded to the kind of military qualification which best deserves recognition.[1]

The State of the *Laws* is thus to be self-contained, and to lie off the beaten track of commerce. It will be an agricultural community, growing sufficient crops for its own needs, and living, if not (like Sparta) in complete, at any rate in comparative isolation, which will permit it to keep unsoiled its original type. In the size of its population it will be a mean between Athens and Sparta;[2] and Plato fixes the number of its citizens at 5040. The number is in no sense arbitrarily chosen. Plato had always believed in the significance of number; and in the last period of his life the Pythagorean element grew even stronger, and Platonic philosophy became still more a philosophy of number. The number 5040 is primarily selected because it is capable of being divided by a number of different divisors into a variety of divisions.[3] It will thus be useful in war, as a basis of military divisions: it will be equally useful in peace for the assessment of taxes and the distribution of land or other public property among the citizens. The main divisor which Plato apparently suggests is the number 12; and the system which he advocates is thus a duodecimal system (746 D-E). This system will serve to provide the State with twelve tribes, and the Council of the State with twelve committees, each serving for a month in the year. It will serve, in civil affairs, as a basis alike of the currency and the reckoning of weights and measures, which will thus be symmetrical and consonant both with one another and with the political structure of the State.[4]

[1] It is interesting to notice that Plato did not belong to the "blue-water school". It was Marathon and Platæa, and not Salamis, that broke the power of Persia (707 C)—as if one should say that Napoleon was defeated at Leipzig and Waterloo, but not at Trafalgar. It may also be noticed that Plato's argument, that the due award of honours is disturbed in a naval State, is almost identical with the argument of the pamphlet on the Athenian constitution falsely ascribed to Xenophon. The author remarks, in his ironical way, that it is just that the common rowers should have more power than the well-born or the well-to-do; it is they, and not the army, who are the basis of the power of the State.

[2] The number of Athenian citizens was upwards of 40,000. The number of free Spartiates had sunk, at the time of the writing of the *Laws*, from the traditional figure of 9000 to that of 1500.

[3] One may illustrate Plato's point by two sums in multiplication:—

$1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 = 5040$; or again, $7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10 = 5040$.

It follows that 5040 is divisible by every number up to ten; and indeed, according to Plato, it is divisible by 59 divisors.

[4] Plato, in adopting the duodecimal system, was departing from the practice of Athens, which had been, since the time of Cleisthenes, largely decimal. Athens had ten tribes, and ten divisions of the council, each acting for one-tenth of the year—a system which conflicted with the division of the year into twelve months. C. Ritter, in his commentary on the *Laws* (pp. 129-39) has an interesting note on Plato's political mathematics. He remarks that Plato, far from showing any decline of his mental powers by indulging in "numerical mysticism," really shows, by his regard for number, the eminently practical eye of an old man with a large experience of the world. It is certainly true that before the development of statistics and statistical methods, and at a time when Arabic numerals were still unknown, a great gain in convenience of administration and business would have resulted from the adoption of a general duodecimal system. Ritter cites the modern metric system as an illustration of the importance, alike in practical life and for scientific purposes, of an easy method of reckoning.

But Plato sees more than practical convenience in a due regard for number. When he requires the legislator to know the number which is most likely to be useful to all States (737 E), and to command the citizens not to lose sight of a uniform numerical system (747 A), he has also in mind the educational value of mathematics. If the State is ordered on a proper numerical basis, it will be, as it were, a living lesson in arithmetic; and there is no subject of education for the young which has such power, whether for domestic economy, or for politics, or for the arts and crafts, as has the study of numbers, which quickens the sluggish and stupid to a vigour and wit beyond the reach of their natural powers. This is an echo, if only an echo, of the doctrine of the *Republic*, that by mathematics men may transcend sense, and rise into the region of pure thought. The last and the loftiest of Plato's arguments for a mathematically ordered State touches the region of metaphysics. A State rightly divided on true mathematical principles will accord with the world and its structure, which is a structure based on number. Every part and portion of the State should be regarded as a sacred gift of God, corresponding to the months and the revolution of the universe (771 B). Number is the secret of sounds and music; number controls the motions of the heavens. The true ruler has seen the mind which moves in the stars of heaven, and the connection of music with its motion; and he brings the habits and laws of our natures into conformity with what he has seen (967 E). The stars in their spheres, revolving by rule and measure, accord with music and its measures; and laws and institutions should accord with both, that there may be a "divine concordance" of all three, and they may all agree in following rule and measure.[1]

The Treatment of Property in the Laws

When Plato turns to sketch the social basis of life in the new colony, he follows as his guiding thread that idea of mixture of different elements which runs through the *Laws*. The social basis must be such that it will be easy to erect upon it a good constitution and system of law; and since the constitution will be mixed, and the law will be a combination of persuasion and command, the social basis must also be a blend of different elements. Marriage must thus be a union of different characters and classes (773 A): property must be a combination of private ownership and public control (740 A); and

[1] The passage is difficult and I may have read too much into it. There is a parallel in the *Politicus* (274 D): "We live our lives in imitating together and following together the order of the whole universe". Campbell quotes, in the introduction to his edition of the *Politicus*, p. xxv, a passage from a late Pythagorean writer which suggests that Plato may have been following Pythagorean ideas in these passages. "As God stands to the world, the king stands to the State, and as the State stands to the world, the king stands to God; for the State, joined together in harmony from many different elements, has imitated the ordering and harmony of the world." The idea also occurs in the *Gorgias* (*supra*, p. 136 n. 2): *cf.* also *supra*, p. 281 n. 1, and *infra*, pp. 349, 350.

the rich, so far as there are any rich, must voluntarily share their wealth with the poor to prevent any civil dissension (736 D-E). Warp and woof—the firm strands and the loose—must be united to form an harmonious texture (734 E-735 A); the design of social arrangements must be the reconciliation of economic interests and the blending of social differences.

The system of property proposed in the *Laws* marks a definite departure from the communistic ideal of the *Republic* (739). Plato distinguishes three grades of constitutions—the best or ideal; the second best or sub-ideal; and a third grade, which he does not explain, but by which we are perhaps intended to understand the constitutions of actual States. The best State, the best constitution, and the best laws are those in which the old saying that friends have all things in common is followed to the greatest extent. In such a State women and children and all things (χρήματα ξύμπαντα) are in common: the conception and the language of private property are banished entirely from life; and the State—one body and one mind—rejoices in a single pleasure and is grieved by a single pain. Whether such an ideal is possible or impossible, to-day or in days to come, one thing is certain: it makes more for goodness, and is therefore truer and better, than any other ideal; it is the pattern of constitution which men should always keep in view, and to which they should seek to make the nearest approach in their power. The perfect energy of life, which lifts men highest above the stalled ox, can perhaps never be attained while things are as they are now, nor so long as women and children and houses are private, and all such things are arranged for every man on that basis (807 B). There is, however, a second best or sub-ideal. "The State we have taken it in hand to build, should it ever come into existence, will be in its way next closest to immortal perfection, and it will be a unity in the next best sense" (739 E). If it can be attained, things will be very tolerably well; and those who live in such a State will have a work to accomplish, in the practising of excellence of body and mind, which is twice and more than twice as arduous as the pursuit of victories in the great games (807 B-C). In this second best State lands and houses will be allotted as private property; nor will there be any farming in common (μὴ κοινῇ γεωργούντων), since such a thing is beyond the reach of men born under the present system, and nurtured and educated in the present way (740 A).[1] Each citizen is to receive

[1] This passage (739 A-740 A) raises a number of difficulties. (1) In 739 A Plato speaks of three grades of πολιτεῖαι, and he adds, in 739 E, that after the second best he will, God willing, describe the third type of πολιτεία. I have taken the third grade, in 739 A, as referring to actual constitutions; and I therefore take the promise in 739 E to be a promise to describe actual constitutions, as they might be reformed without sacrifice of their essential features. On this view Plato's procedure is analogous to that of Aristotle in the *Politics*, in which (*a*) an ideal State is sketched in Books VII and VIII, (*b*) a sub-ideal "polity" is sketched in Book IV, and (*c*) the organisation of actual States, especially democracy and oligarchy, and the methods of averting dissensions in

a lot for himself in the original distribution; but each, if he receives it as private property, is to consider that it also belongs in common to all the State. Plato, like Aristotle afterwards, would combine private possession with common use, as the practice of Sparta, in some ways, actually did. The right to property must be recognised as a socially created right, to be used for the benefit of society: it must not be regarded as an absolute or inherent right of the individual, entitling him to do what he likes with his own. Plato not only lays down the general principle; he proposes a method for its enforcement. The produce of the land must support a system of common tables (806 E), in which women, as well as men, will share; and thus, if ownership is private, consumption at any rate will be public and common.

The 5040 original lots are to be equal, and they are also to be inalienable (741 B). The population must be kept stationary at the number of 5040, in order that there may always be one citizen for each of the lots. If a citizen has no child to succeed him in the inheritance of his lot, he must adopt as his heir the son of another citizen. If there is a general tendency to exceed the prescribed number of the population, births must be restricted or a colony founded: if the tendency is the other way (and this seems to be Plato's fear—a fear which the decline in Spartan numbers might readily suggest), rewards must be given to the married and penalties attached to the celibate. But the equality which Plato is thus careful to preserve is only an equality of the original lots, or in other words of landed property: it is consistent, and it is combined, with inequality of personal possessions. It might be best that every

those states, are considered in Books V and VI. C. Ritter, *ad locum*, while he takes the third grade in 739 A to refer to "die Gewohnliche Staaten," suggests that the third type which Plato promises to describe in 739 E is the actual constitution for the new colony, as distinct from the sketch or outline of such a constitution (*cf. supra*, p. 314 n. 1). Such a change of meaning, within so short a space, seems to me improbable, and it is difficult to conceive of the actual constitution of the colony as differing from the sketch of that constitution in the way in which the third type of constitution must differ from the second. In any case Plato's promise to describe the third type is not fulfilled, and is hardly meant to be fulfilled. (2) I have already dealt with Natorp's view, that the ideal sketched in this passage of the *Laws* is not identical with that of the *Republic*, but rather the ideal of a "full communism," in which not only the two upper classes, but all the citizens share, and not only the annual quota paid to these classes, but *all things*, are held in common (*supra*, p. 216 note 1). I believe, on the contrary, that Plato is referring, if somewhat loosely, to the ideal of the *Republic*, and I cannot conceive that he should have casually mentioned a different ideal in a few words in an isolated passage of the *Laws*. Recognising, as he now does, that the communistic ideal is one for gods or the sons of gods (739 B), Plato simply colours it more in retrospect than he had done in reality when he was writing the *Republic*, and when he was hoping to see communism realised among men. (3) The reference to "common farming" in 740 A seems to imply that in the scheme of the *Republic* land was to be held and farmed in common; while, as a matter of fact, Plato's proposal was that land should be owned and farmed in severalty by the farming class. Plato's reference to the *Republic* would appear to be loose, if any such reference is here intended; but he may have intended no such reference, and only have meant to say that common farming belonged to "the age of Cronus".

settler should bring to the colony an equality of possessions; but this is impossible (744 B). Plato accordingly provides that every citizen should be permitted to acquire possessions, or personalty, up to the value of four times that of the lot (744 E). There will thus be a scale of wealth, ranging from the man who possesses a lot, with the minimum of personalty, to the man who possesses a lot with personalty of four times its value. The former is the necessary condition of citizenship: anything in excess of the latter must go to the public exchequer.[1] The result is a system of four classes based on a property qualification; and on this, when he comes to construct the constitution, Plato bases the franchise and its exercise. The division of classes here proposed suggests the four classes of Solonian Athens; and another division which Plato proposes seems based on Athenian precedent. Cleisthenes had created ten tribes, and to each he had allotted a territorial district, though that territorial district was divided into three separate units, each situated in a different part of Attica. Plato, adopting a duodecimal system, proposes twelve tribes, each with a territorial district which, unlike the districts of Cleisthenes, is apparently to be a compact block. In one respect, however, Plato imitates the policy of Cleisthenes; and if he does not divide the districts of the tribes into disconnected units, he divides the holding of each citizen into two disconnected halves (745 C-E), one of which is to be near the central city, and the other to be near the frontiers of the country.[2] His object, like the object of Cleisthenes, would seem to be the prevention of local feeling and local divisions. If each man has two holdings and two houses, one in the city and one in the country, it will be hard for any division to arise between the town and country interests.[3]

The System of Economics in the State of the Laws

Though every citizen has his lot, with its two divisions, and though some of the citizens are comparatively rich in personal possessions,

[1] It is a necessary part of this system, and Plato makes the provision, that all personal property should be publicly registered (745 A-754 E). Similarly, in the later books of the *Laws*, where he is speaking of taxation (955 D-E), he provides that, with a view to taxation, each citizen must have his property (or capital) assessed, and that a return of the annual yield (or income) must also be made. The government will thus be able to impose taxation on the basis either of capital or of income.

[2] The State of the *Laws*, physically considered, contains a central city, divided into twelve parts, and a rural territory, also divided into twelve parts (each of which is the home of a tribe) by lines radiating from the centre of the city.

[3] The three disconnected units, into which Cleisthenes divided each tribe, consisted of a unit in or near the city, another on the coast, and a third which lay between, in the interior of the country. His object was to put an end to the struggles between different local interests—struggles which had made possible the tyranny of Peisistratus—by combining all the three interests in each of his ten tribes. Plato's adoption of a similar policy may have been partly due to the experience of the Peloponnesian war, in which it was found that the citizens living in the country, and exposed to Spartan ravages, were opposed in interest to the citizens who lived inside the walls of Athens.

Plato leaves little if any scope for economic interests or activity to any of his citizens. No citizen can practise any art or craft (846 D), or use any ignoble method of money-making, like the art of buying and selling, which perverts a free and "gentle" nature to base vulgarity (741 E). No citizen may be in possession of gold or silver; and though there will be a coinage, it will only have local currency, and will not circulate abroad (742 A).[1] Interest is to be forbidden; lending must be at the lender's risk; the borrower is to be under no legal obligation to repay the capital he has borrowed (742 C).[2] Excluded from industry and from commerce, forbidden to take interest or even to possess the precious metals, the citizen will be free from the temptation to make the accumulation of wealth into the aim of his life, and he will therefore be free for that pursuit of "excellence of body and mind," to which great riches is the worst and bitterest enemy. To Plato, as to St. Paul, the love of money is the root of all evil; and when he says that great riches cannot dwell with great goodness (742 E-743 A), he almost echoes the saying of our Lord, that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven.[3] If riches is thus the enemy of goodness, and if it is the aim of the State and the laws to produce goodness, it must also be the aim of the State to prevent men from pursuing riches. It will be acting in its own interest, as well as in the interest of its members, if it seeks to achieve that aim: riches is the prolific mother of dissension and litigation, and dissension and litigation destroy that community of feeling which is a necessary basis of the State (743 C). The State which desires goodness for its members and unity for itself will base itself exclusively on agriculture; nor will it pursue even agriculture further than the due needs of body and mind require (743 D). In such a State, thus based on physiocratic principles, and thus following the true and natural economy of a purely agricultural life, the work of the legislator will be less than half of what is elsewhere. Free from any need of dealing with shipping and commerce and retail trade—quit of all concern with loans and compound interest and a thousand

[1] Plato is perhaps thinking of the so-called "iron" coinage of Sparta (iron spits or ὀβελοί). He is willing, however, that the State should possess a quantity of general Hellenic money, which it will exchange against the local currency with those who wish, and are permitted, to travel.

[2] These rules are suggested in the *Republic*, 556 B, as the only methods of saving an oligarchy from destruction (*cf. supra*, p. 253).

[3] Plato is not speaking conventionally (though it is easy to utter conventional platitudes about *auri sacri fames*): he is speaking in very real earnest. This appears in the remark, which the Cretan Cleinias is represented as making to the Athenian stranger (832 B): "You seem to us to be castigating the money-loving temper more than you ought, as if you positively hated it". This follows on a passage (831 C-832 B) in which Plato has been speaking of the love of money as the great temptress that ensnares men's souls away from goodness. It may be added that Aristotle, in the first book of the *Politics*, reproduces Plato's condemnation of commerce, interest, and money, and Plato's insistence on the exclusive pursuit of agriculture. Plato's attitude to wealth is interesting; but it does not seem to me to indicate, as Pöhlmann thinks, a socialistic aversion to capital. It is rather an ethical aversion to the deceitfulness of riches.

other such things—he will legislate simply for farmers and shepherds and bee-keepers (842 C). Nor are the citizens of such a State less fortunate than their legislators. They too are quit of more than half the burdens of ordinary men; and they too—like the guardians of the *Republic*,[1] if a little less fortunate—will be free to run the great race that is set before them. Each has his assured lot of land: each has it tilled for him by slaves, who, holding the lot by a sort of metayer tenancy, pay part of the produce as their rent:[2] and each, with his women-folk, messes at common tables, in happy company with his fellows. But this is only one side of the picture, and Plato is well aware that there is another. These institutions are, indeed, only second best; but even so they are a dream, and a dream which can never perhaps be realised (745 E-746 D). It is unlikely that men will ever endure to have limits fixed to the amount of their property and the size of their families: it is unlikely that they will ever

[1] Plato seems to echo the *Republic* (465 D) in this passage of the *Laws* (807 C). In the *Republic* the guardians are said to have won an even greater victory, and to have gained even greater rewards, than Olympic victors. In the *Laws* the citizens are said to be set free to strive for an excellence which costs twice, or more than twice, the toil and trouble needed for a victory in the Pythian or Olympic games.

[2] This slavery is really serfdom or villeinage. It is like the slavery (or, as it should be called, the serfdom) which Tacitus noticed among the Germans (*Germania*, c. xxv. : frumenti modum dominus aut pecoris aut vestis injungit, et servus hactenus paret): it is like the serfdom of the Helots at Sparta. Slavery in the strict sense of the word, as indicating personal chattels, and not predial serfs, hardly exists in the *Laws*, any more than, as we have seen reason to believe (*supra*, p. 267 n. 1), it exists in the *Republic*. The citizens of Plato's colony do not, as Athenian citizens did, own industrial slaves (though he speaks of such slaves as belonging to resident aliens); and the colony itself has not, as Athens had, public slaves in its service. In discussing the position of the "slaves," who till the land of the citizens, Plato (followed here, as so often, by Aristotle in the *Politics*) suggests that they should not be fellow-countrymen of one another, nor, if possible, speak the same language: they will thus be less able to combine, and more easily held in subjection (777 C; *cf. Politics*, VII. 10, § 13, 1330, a 25-6). He remarks that there are two different and opposite ways of treating slaves among the Greeks. Some masters, recognising the advantage of having the best and most devoted slaves, and knowing that slaves have often saved the lives and property of their masters, are generous in their treatment. Others, again, thinking that slaves are built differently and worse than other men, are brutal and overbearing, and make their slaves many times more degraded than they naturally are. He makes the fine suggestion (777 D) that, even more from self-respect than from regard for the slave, masters should cherish their slaves properly. They should be more ready to do them justice than they would be to do justice to their equals, reflecting that the quality of justice is shown most clearly, where injustice is most easily committed, and that good behaviour to slaves elicits goodness in them. On the other hand, slaves should be firmly punished and not merely rebuked when they have done wrong; and a master should always use the language of command, and never the language of jest (777 E-778 C; *cf. Politics*, I. 13, § 14, 1260, b 5-7), which only makes it more difficult for the master to rule and for the slave to obey. If we admit the existence of slavery, Plato's rules for the treatment of slaves are at once good sense and good morals. But it would be wrong to say that Plato really transcends the ordinary Greek view of slavery. He couples the slave with the child, as having a mind imperfectly developed (793 E: 937 A). In the provisions of his criminal code he is sometimes less harsh to the slave than to the citizen (854 E: 941 E), and sometimes, again, decidedly harsher (845 A: 872 B); but in either case his assumption is the same, that the slave is a different and lower being. That assumption appears most clearly in the law of murder (865-874), and in the distinction there drawn between murder by freemen and murder by slaves, and again between murder of freemen and murder of slaves.

consent to be deprived of gold and silver, or to have their lots divided into town and country halves. Plato admits the truth of such objections; but he pleads that an ideal must first be exhibited as a perfect and consistent whole, before it is put to the test of practice and pared down or modified—here a little and there a little—to suit the exigencies of actual life. The plea is perfectly valid; but it proves (and the point is important) that even the secondary ideal of the *Laws* is still an ideal, and that Plato, when he exhibited that ideal, had as little (or even less) hope of its realisation, as he had when he sketched the palmary ideal of the *Republic*.

Yet Plato seeks, in many respects, to make his peace with actuality, when he comes to discuss the details of the economic life of his State. Industry and commerce, after all, are not banished from the State. They are interdicted to the citizen; but they have their place in the economy of the State, provided that they are conducted by aliens. To the citizen the art of politics and the pursuit of excellence of body and mind; to the slave agriculture; to the alien commerce and industry—this is the Platonic division of labour in the *Laws*. The old spirit of the *Republic* still breathes in its pages; and if the three-class system which we may detect in the *Laws* is fundamentally different from that of the *Republic*, the basic principle remains the same, that each man should pursue a single and specific function. It is this principle which inspires the rule, that the citizen shall practise no art or craft other than of a perfect citizenship: it is this principle equally which inspires the rule that no alien shall practise more than a single art (846 D-847 A). But subject to this principle, and subject to these rules, Plato admits a large play of economic activity. There are to be thirteen divisions of alien artisans, one in the city and one in each tribal district. In each of these districts the local division of artisans is to be properly distributed among the different villages; and every village is thus to contain every type of art or craft which is necessary for the convenience of all the neighbouring farms (848 E). In spite of his objections to the commercial State, Plato finds room for foreign commerce and even for free trade (847 B). No duties are to be levied either on imports or on exports; but the importation of unnecessary luxuries (such as dyes and spicery), and the exportation of necessary commodities, are both to be prohibited. The State of the *Laws* is in nothing like the *geschlossene Handelstaat* of which Fichte wrote: it tolerates alike the free import of necessary commodities, and the free entry of alien artisans.[1] Nor is Plato's view of internal trade

[1] The aliens of whom Plato speaks are of two sorts: (1) resident aliens (μετοίκοι, or "fellow-dwellers"), who may stay for twenty years, without paying any "alien duty" (μετοίκιον), provided that they practise a craft, and who may stay for life, if the public assembly of the State consents (850); (2) passing strangers (ξένοι). who come in the summer for trade, and who may do their trading in the suburbs (952 E). Plato, who (as the *dramatis personæ* of the *Republic* show; *supra*, p. 154) was personally friendly

a narrow view. It is true that he prohibits retail trade (καπηλεία) for the sake of money-making (847 E); but this must not be interpreted to mean an absolute prohibition. Resident aliens must necessarily buy food from the citizens, and Plato accordingly sets aside a third of the produce of the country for their use (848 A). They must necessarily sell, as the citizens must necessarily buy, the products of their arts. Retail trade is a necessity: and provided that the element of money-making is eliminated, or at any rate limited, it must necessarily be permitted. The problem to be solved is thus the problem, which so often arises in the course of the *Laws*, of finding a reconciliation between two different and discrepant elements (918 B-920 C). On the one hand retail trade is necessary; and it is even more than necessary—it is beneficial. The seller of goods, by using money as a common measure of value, reduces all commodities into terms of a single standard. He liberates men from the painful effort of measuring one commodity against another by the process of barter. In this sense he is a benefactor, with a profession which produces a social advantage; and he has his allotted place and function in the community, which is that of providing, and providing abundantly, satisfaction for its needs and commensurability for its goods. On the other hand buying and selling is the chief root of the love of money, and the love of money is the root of all evil. If it could be undertaken by persons who were immune from this consequence, and if innkeeping and shopkeeping were in the hands of men of the best type, we should see how pleasant and agreeable such things could be.[1] But this suggestion, interesting as it is, is not the basis of the solution which Plato proposes. Men of the best type have other and prior cares: the citizen can only be a passive party to all transactions of business; and if he seeks to take an active part, and (as a mediæval bishop wrote) "degenerating from the condition of his degree turns to the multiplication of money by way of merchandise," he is to be imprisoned for a year. Buying and selling must be left to aliens; but they must be placed under such control that the appetite for profit will have little chance of finding any satisfaction. Plato advocates a system of open markets, where buyers and sellers are gathered together in public, and regulation is easy.

with resident aliens at Athens, is generous in his treatment of that class. He proposes to give special legal protection even to the passing stranger, in reverence to the god of strangers, Ζεὺς ξένιος (879 E).

[1] As if one should say, that if all inns were managed by the People's Refreshment House Association, and all shops were run on co-operative principles, innkeeping and shopkeeping would both be vastly more pleasant. Plato's reference to Greek inns (919 A) is a curious sidelight on his times—and on the immutability of some things through all times. "The innkeeper receives men who are in trouble or necessity in a welcome resting-place: when men have been buffeted violently by angry storms he finds them a halcyon calm, or again a refuge and refreshment from the heat. And then, instead of treating them as guests, he behaves as if they were captive enemies whom he had taken, and will only let them free on receiving an extortionate, unjust, and abominable ransom." It almost seems as if Plato, after finding "the warmest welcome at an inn," had too often found also the longest bill.

(849). Credit is not to be recognised: the seller who sells on credit sells at his own risk (880 A). Profits are to be fixed by the magistrates at a moderate rate (920 C): only one price is to be asked by the seller for a commodity on any one market day (917 B); adulteration of goods is to be punished by a stripe for every drachma of the price of the adulterated goods (917 D).[1]

On the whole, and on any general view, it is unnecessary, and it is unjust, to accuse Plato of any aristocratic aloofness from the workaday life of the business world. Such prejudice as he shows is in no sense a class-prejudice: it is a prejudice of a moral order. He stands aloof from the seamy side of Levantine haggling and the chicaneries of the bazaar; and he stands aloof because he believes in that plain living which is the mother of high thinking and high action. In the strength of that belief he condemns much that he hardly need have condemned, and he accepts some things which would perhaps have been better condemned. He conceives citizenship as a high calling which engrosses the whole of life; and for its sake he condemns any participation of his citizens in industry and commerce, while he accepts the institution of slavery. The conception of Pericles is less strained, but really nobler: the true citizen must live in the economic world as well as in the world of politics. But if there are some things which are ascetically impossible, there is also much in Plato that is tenderly human. The law of poor relief which he suggests may serve as an instance (936 B-C). Sturdy beggars he would have transported; but he has pity on men of good character, whether they be freemen or whether they be slaves, who have fallen into misfortune. "It would be strange indeed if such were utterly neglected, whether bond or free, or fell into utter destitution, in any constitution or State which is even tolerably ordered." This is the language, not of class-prejudice, but of universal humanity; nor is the treatment which Plato would have meted out to aliens, or the conduct he would have masters pursue towards slaves, or the attitude he adopts both to foreign commerce and to internal trade, in any way unworthy of a generous and liberal spirit. It is perhaps a little thing, and yet it is also significant, that he finds room for something like technical education, suggesting that boys should be taught in advance the knowledge they will afterwards require for their profession, and should practise, in early years and with mimic tools, the arts of carpentry and building and husbandry (643 B).

The Treatment of Marriage and the Family in the Laws

In the domain of social relations proper, and in all that touches the position of women and the institution of marriage, the Plato of

[1] The second of these provisions is satirised by a comic poet. Alexis (Jowett, introduction to the *Laws*, p. v), on the ground that it would stop a fishmonger from selling his fish for less at the end of the day than at the beginning, and force him to take them home to rot. The third would result in a somewhat irrational grading of punishment.

the *Laws* is closely akin to the Plato of the *Republic*. With all the old liberality, and with something also of the old earnest tyranny, he insists on the right and the duty of women to take their place by the side of men in the general life of the State. One of the two theses of the *Republic*—that women should have the same education as men, and be free to follow the same pursuits—is maintained almost in its entirety; and if the other—that the State should be one family, and wives and children should both be common—is largely abandoned, Plato still holds that women should be drawn into public life by a system of common tables, and he still believes that marriage should be controlled in the public interest. In an interesting passage (805 D-806 C) he examines the actual position of women in the communities of his day. In Thrace women are household drudges and almost slaves: they till the ground and tend the cattle. In Attica the wife is mistress of the house and its chattels: but her epitaph is at best *domi mansit, lanam fecit*. In Sparta unmarried girls have their gymnastics; but the married woman, though she spins no web but the stern web of the Spartan stock, is only half housekeeper, half *mater dura virum*. No community recognises what in Plato's view are the basic facts, that women, though with an inferior capacity and in an inferior degree, are capable of sharing the pursuits and the duties of men, and that, unless they do, the State has lost the services of a half of its members (805 A : 781 B). Recognise these facts, and it follows that the management and ordering of all institutions must be on a common principle for men and women alike. Women must share, first of all, in the system of common tables.[1] The men may sit apart; but their wives and daughters must sit at neighbouring tables (806 E). They may protest against being forced to leave the seclusion in which they have dwelt, and to which they have grown inured; but whatever their protestations, they must be drawn into the common life of the State, if ever they are to be imbued with its spirit and become partners in its work (781). In the next place, they must share the same training as men; and a single system of universal compulsory education must include both sexes alike. Women like men must be trained in gymnastics: girls and young women must share in the contests of boys and young men: grown women, until they are married, must share in the contests of grown men; and if they will, women may even take part in tournaments, and fight in arms on horseback by the side of men (833-834). Trained like men, women, in the hour of need, must fight like men. They are liable to national service: they must take the field along with men for military drill one day in every month (829 B); and if war comes, and the enemy is at the gate, they must not hide or wail, but come into the open and fight for their young, "as birds will" (814 B). But though Plato thus claims the services of women for the State, he has nothing to say in the *Laws* of their

[1] The system of common tables may be said to be a sort of "co-operative housekeeping" (the phrase is Professor Burnet's); it is at once a means for releasing women from household cares for public life, and a form of public life in itself.

holding office or voting in the assembly. There are women officials, it is true, but they are only connected with the institution of marriage; and there is no suggestion in the *Laws* like the suggestion of women guardians in the *Republic*. Plato, it may be, forgot this side of the matter, or only remembered it far enough to write, that "praise should be given to women, no less than to men, who have shown distinguished virtue" (802 A); or he may have thought that the life of the family, which he had banished from the *Republic*, but which is left intact in the *Laws*, was inconsistent with any political activity of women.

Marriage in the *Laws* is monogamous; but it is controlled, from beginning to end, by the State. Plato begins by providing for young men and maidens falling in love. Every month each tribe is to have a religious assembly, for acquaintance' sake and to promote good fellowship; and these assemblies, among other purposes,[1] are to serve the purpose of introducing men to their future wives (771 D).[2] He provides, too, that men and women should see one another stripped, before they are married; and here he anticipates a proposal, once advocated on eugenic grounds, that bride and bridegroom should exchange certificates of health (772). Following the cardinal idea of the *Laws*, and the suggestion already made in the *Politicus*, he advises that marriage should always be a mixture of opposites: the rich should marry the poor, and the impetuous temperament the calm—not indeed under legal compulsion, which can hardly be applied, but under the persuasion that marriage should be contracted for the benefit of the State rather than for private pleasure (773). When they are married, he would have husband and wife remember that it is their duty to breed children for the service of the State; and to this end he places husband and wife under the supervision of women overseers for the first ten years of their marriage (764). In a State in which the population is to be kept at a stationary figure, regulation of some sort (though it could hardly be acceptable in the shape of these women overseers) is an obvious necessity; and such regulation, while with some it must take the form of restriction of offspring,[3] must with others take the form of encouragement (740). Plato, whose fear, as we have seen, was a falling rather than a rising birth-rate, proposes to encourage the birth of children partly by the admonitions of the women overseers,

[1] Friendship and social intercourse are one of the bonds of the State; and these assemblies are a form of social intercourse. It is necessary, too, that citizens should know one another personally, in order that honour may be given to those to whom honour is due, and office to the deserving (738 E). In the first two books of the *Laws* much space and thought is devoted to the discussion of social intercourse, and the consideration of the place which dance and song, and especially wine, should occupy in such intercourse.

[2] Plato's provision of a common meeting-ground, on which the two sexes may come to know one another, might well be imitated in modern communities, in which millions of men and women only meet, and make the acquaintances which lead to marriage, in the streets.

[3] ἐπίσχεσις γενέσεως (740 D). Plato does not explain in the *Laws*, as he does in the *Republic*, the methods of such prevention of birth.

partly by the grant of privileges and honours to parents, and partly by the method, which has its advocates at the present time, of imposing a tax on bachelors who have passed the age of thirty-five (721 D: 774 A). But these measures are not only based on physical grounds: they have also their moral reasons. It is the duty of men to marry and beget children, in order that they may partake of immortality: celibacy is really a form of impiety (721 D).[1] It is the duty of men to keep sound and pure in body and mind; for they cannot help leaving the impression of themselves on the souls and bodies of their children (775 E).[2] Of the virtue of chastity Plato speaks earnestly and at length (835 E-841 E); and of the state of marriage he speaks almost in the language of the book of Ruth. "Husband and wife shall leave father and mother and kinsfolk: they shall make to themselves, as it were, a colony, and dwell there: they shall beget and rear children, and hand on life like a torch from one generation to another; and they shall always worship the gods according to the law" (776 B-C).[3]

On the whole Plato's view of marriage is very far from being merely physical. It has its moral and even its religious side; and if it errs, it errs in a way in which Plato often errs in the *Laws*, by an excess of earnest but perhaps impossible supervision. Nor is Plato's general conception of social and economic conditions on any other than a noble level. There is much practical wisdom, and there is much humanity and moral insight, in many of its features. The emphasis which he lays on number has its practical as well as its mystical side: his suggestions of registration of property, and of regular assessment of capital and income, are both statesmanlike. His belief in free trade may be set against his aversion to all things maritime: his advocacy of poor relief, even for slaves, against his attitude to slavery, which, even in itself, has its finer sides. His view of marriage is a mixture of wisdom, both on the physical and on the moral side, with regulation less wise than the principles on which it is based: his view of the place of women in the community, if on one point perhaps defective, and on another, again, excessive, is on the whole liberal. The Plato of the *Laws* is not a socialist, but he recognises the social character of the right of property: he is something of a physiocrat, but he recognises the need and the value of industry and of exchange. His defects flow from the application of a moral standard with too rigorous a consequence; but their quality is greater than their defect There is little here that is dead, or, if it is dead, it 'yet speaketh'.

[1] This is a view which would have shocked the ages of asceticism, in which virginity was almost accounted for saintship.

[2] One point, on which Plato here anticipates the teaching of modern eugenics, is the effect of parental drunkenness on the children of drunkards. The whole view is strikingly confirmed by what modern science tells us of the germ-plasm.

[3] Divorce is permitted in the *Laws* for incompatibility of temper, if the guardians of the law and the women overseers are unable to effect a reconciliation (929 E-930 A).

CHAPTER XV

THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN THE *LAWS*

THE sovereignty of law is one of the fundamental principles of the *Laws*. Governments must be accommodated to law, and not law to governments. If sovereignty is thus vested in law, it follows that we need not expect to find any political authority in the State of the *Laws* which corresponds to the sovereign of a modern community. No body of magistrates; no council or senate; no assembly, however broad, will be other than subordinate to the rule of law.[1] That, at any rate, is the thesis of the *Laws* until we come to the twelfth book; and the twelfth book, for a number of reasons, must be considered as an addendum or postscript, which does not tally with the earlier books, and needs to be considered by itself. There is a further reason for the absence of any sovereign body or person from the State of the *Laws*. The constitution of that State is, *ex hypothesi*, to be mixed. It is to reconcile monarchy with democracy, the principle of knowledge with the principle of liberty. A mixed constitution can hardly contain a single sovereign authority. If it is impossible to say of the constitution of Sparta whether it is a monarchy or an aristocracy, a tyranny or a democracy, it must be equally impossible to say of the State which Plato builds in the *Laws* that it is ruled by any one sovereign authority.

The Provisions for the Beginning of the State

In building the State, Plato distinguishes the period during which it gets into working order from the subsequent period of regular action. The former is abnormal, and it may need abnormal methods. One such method, he suggests, in a passage in the fourth book of the

[1] The rule of law, it should be noticed, does not bear the same meaning in Plato's *Laws* which it bears in a book such as Dicey's *Law of the Constitution*. To the English thinker it means that executive officials, like all other persons, are amenable to the common law of the land, as made by parliamentary enactment, and that they are tried before the ordinary judges who administer this law. The rule of law is thus compatible with the sovereignty of parliament, and with the right of parliament to alter the law which the judges administer. To Plato the rule of law means that every authority in the State—not only the executive officials, but also the assembly and the council—are under a code of law which, once enacted by the legislator and definitely established in action, is fundamental. Plato follows the Greek conception that the play of opinion should be adjusted, through education, to a fixed body of law, rather than law adjusted, through representation, to the movement of opinion.

Laws, would be to conjoin the legislator with a tyrant, young, bold, and magnificent, quick to learn and slow to forget, and possessed of the sovereign virtue of self-control (709 E). The legislator needs a fortunate conjuncture of the stars if he is to succeed, and God gives none more fortunate than the chance which brings him together with such a tyrant. "There is not, and there never could be, a quicker or better way of establishing a constitution" (710 B). Plato is impelled to this view by the feeling, that while it is comparatively easy to define what good laws are, the difficulty lies rather in getting a motive behind the laws which will impress them on a people. The "young tyrant" presents himself as a solution of the difficulty. He will impress the laws on his people, partly by the way of example, and by the force of a personality which men are ready to follow, and partly by the way of coercion and the use of actual force. He will sketch the outline in his own action: he will fill in the outline by coercing those who fail to follow its indication. It is the old ideal of the *Republic* once more, but bipartite and temporary; instead of philosopher-kings, there is a single philosopher, or legislator, combined with a tyrant, and both are temporary expedients during the throes of birth.[1] But the actual method suggested by Plato, when he comes to consider the making of a constitution at the beginning of the sixth book, is widely different. The founders of the colony take the place of the young tyrant; and it is they who, by their co-operation, are to aid the legislator in bringing the new State into regular order and action. The colonists themselves will be ignorant of one another:

[1] Plato almost seems to be quoting the great paradox of the *Republic* (473 C-D), when he writes (*Laws*, 712 A), "when supreme power coincides in a man with wisdom and self-control, there comes to pass the birth of the best constitution and laws; but it never will come to pass in any other way". There are several other considerations raised by this important passage. (1) The reference to the young tyrant cannot but suggest Dionysius the younger. It is curious that Plato, after his experience of Dionysius, and at a time when he was in close touch with Dio and the friends of Dio who had expelled the tyrant, should still speak in praise of tyranny. Plato feels the difficulty; and Cleinias is made to say, "How, and by what argument, could any man arguing in this way convince himself that he was right?" (710 C). But the thesis of the *Republic* cannot be abandoned, whatever the difficulties in the way of its realisation, and however sad the lessons of experience: the true ideal is still the conversion of a sovereign to the light. It is perhaps worth noticing that in the fifth book of the *Laws*, Plato more than once speaks of a legislator who is also himself a tyrant as more powerful, and therefore, apparently, more to be desired than one who is not (*cf.* 735 D: 739 A). (2) It is another difficulty, that the method proposed in this passage hardly relates to a new State in process of creation, but rather to an old State in process of alteration. This seems to follow from 710 D-E, where it is suggested that the change to a model State is most easily made from tyranny, next from legal monarchy, and next from democracy, but is only made with great difficulty from oligarchy. Plato, in spite of what he says about the foundation of a colony and the "clean slate" on which its constitution is to be written, is still preoccupied with actual States and the reform of actual conditions. (3) The reference to the 'young tyrant' does not square with the method actually suggested in the sixth book for getting the State of the *Laws* into working order. It is perhaps only introduced in order to prepare the way for the suggestion of 'preambles,' which follows closely upon it. If the legislator cannot count on the co-operation of a tyrant, he can appeal to a people, and persuade it to accept his laws, by preambles.

they will not know whom to elect to office; and being still untrained in the spirit of the laws, they will be liable to error if they are left to their own devices (751). The founders of the colony must therefore choose the first body of guardians of the law; and the majority of those whom they choose must be taken from their own numbers.[1] They must also appoint a temporary body of 200 members, half from their own numbers, and half from the ranks of the colonists, to see that the rest of the magistrates are duly chosen for the first time, and undergo proper scrutiny before they enter on office. If they do these things, the founders will have done their work; and henceforth the new State must work out its own salvation for itself (754 D).[2]

The Permanent Institutions of the State

In the settled colony, which has entered on its regular life, the electoral authority is a popular assembly, which elects the deliberative body, or council, and the various executive magistrates. This assembly is the whole body of 5040 citizens, arranged in four classes, on the basis of a property qualification, according to the differences in the amount of personalty which they possess. Attendance at its meetings is compulsory on the citizens in the first two classes, and optional for the citizens in the third and fourth (764 A); but no citizen in any class may attend, unless he bears arms and has gone through military service (753 B).[3] The functions of the assembly are almost exclusively electoral, and it may be said to exist for the purpose of electing the guardians of the law and the council, though it also elects the generals of the army and a number of local officials besides. The thirty-seven guardians of the law are to be elected by a triple ballot: 300 candidates are to be selected by the first vote, 200 of these are to be eliminated by the second, and the final election is to be made by the third from the 100 candidates who remain (753). The election of the council is much more elaborate; and it is here that the system of classes, which apparently finds no place in the election of the guardians of the law, comes definitely into play. The council is to consist of 360 members, elected annually, and 90 of these are to come from each class. The first stage in the election (which we may call, as it was called at Athens, in the fifth century, by the name of προκρίσις) is the selection of candidates. Plato leaves no

[1] The guardians of the law hold office for twenty years, and the colony will thus be provided for many years in advance.

[2] Apart from the Corinthian colonies, which Corinth sought to keep attached to and dependent on herself, Greek colonies were from the first autonomous. The mother-city might appoint the œcist or legislator (though he was often appointed by the colonists themselves); but otherwise the colony arranged all its own affairs. See Hermann-Swoboda, *Lehrbuch der Griechischen Staatsaltertümer*, III. 1, pp. 191 *sqq.*

[3] One may cite in illustration the polity established in Athens during the revolution of 411, in which the franchise was limited to 5000 citizens who could provide themselves with armour. It must be added that the passage in 753 A, imposing the qualification of military service, only relates, as it stands, to meetings of the assembly for the purpose of electing guardians of the law and generals.

room for private nominations by individuals or caucuses: the candidates for a seat on the council, like the candidates for the office of guardian, must be selected by public vote. But the candidates of the different classes are to be selected in different ways. The citizens of every class, compulsorily and under the sanction of a fine, are to select the candidates of the first and second classes. In the selection of the candidates of the third class the citizens of the first three classes are compelled to vote, under penalty of a fine: the citizens of the fourth class are free to vote or abstain. In the selection of the candidates of the fourth class the citizens of the first two classes must vote, or submit to a fine, which for citizens of the second class is triple, and for those of the first class quadruple, the amount of the previous fine; but members of the last two classes may either vote or abstain from voting. The first selection of candidates thus made, the next stage (which we may call *αἵρεσις*) is the voting on all these candidates for the purpose of making a second selection; and in this stage all the citizens, under penalty of the ordinary fine, must join in eliminating all but 180 of the candidates in each of the four classes. The third and last stage (which we may call *κλήρωσις*) is the selection by lot of 90 members of the council from the 180 candidates left in each class; and thus the election of the whole council of 360 members is finally completed.[1]

The effect of this system is that the first two classes will tend to exercise a preponderant voice in the selection of candidates. At the same time, all the classes *may* join in the original selection of candidates in every class; all the classes *must* join in the process of elimination; and the use of the lot is meant to secure equality in the final stage. The whole system is a carefully calculated combination of universal suffrage with class-suffrage, and again of what the Greeks regarded as the aristocratic method of election by voting with what they regarded as the democratic method of the lot. Plato defends the system as a mean between the monarchical principle of wisdom and the democratic principle of liberty (756 E). The former is

[1] The method proposed by Plato may be said to be a combination of the four-class system with the methods of *πρόκρισις* and *κλήρωσις* which were used at Athens for the election of the *βουλή* in the first half of the fifth century (*cf. supra*, p. 34). Two modern analogies suggest themselves. (1) The compulsory vote is part of the Belgian constitution and of the constitutions of some of the Swiss cantons. (2) The use of the four-class system in the election of the council corresponds in some ways to the use of the three-class system once used in the election of the Prussian diet. There the electorate was divided into three classes, on the basis of a property qualification; and each of these classes, which of course were numerically unequal (the first containing about 5 per cent, and the third some 80 per cent of the whole electorate), elected an equal number of electors. The electors then chose the members from the candidates proposed by the various parties. The Prussian system sought to produce equality of property (at the expense of equality of persons), and it might be said to aim at proportionate equality, which according to Plato is the true equality, but it also accentuated social divisions. The system of Plato is much more moderate, but it is perhaps open, as Aristotle by implication suggests, to the same criticism.

represented by the superior power which the upper (and presumably wiser) classes may exercise in the selection of candidates; the latter by the possible participation of all the citizens in the first stage, their necessary participation in the second, and the democratic use of the lot in the third. He also defends the system on the further ground that it is based on that true equality which is "proportionate". To pursue entirely the principle of absolute equality—to give equal power and honour to persons who are unequal in capacity and desert—is to pursue a false equality, and to abandon the way of justice. True equality is proportionate, or an equality of ratios: it can only be attained when the ratio between the desert and the honour of the superior is equal to that between the desert and the honour of the inferior; and that, again, can only be attained when greater desert receives greater honour, and less receives less (757).[1] Such proportionate equality, as it is true equality, is also justice: it means that the State does to its citizens according as they do to it. It is also concord and stability; for no State can be at harmony, in which the good have a discontented sense that desert goes unrewarded. The difficulty of this last argument, as Plato feels, is that if it is true it proves too much. There is little reason in principles such as these for any recognition of the absolute equality of the lot. Plato confesses as much. "It is necessary for every State at times to use the words 'equality' and 'justice' in a secondary sense, in order to avoid dissension. At such times it substitutes equity, or even charity, for the proper and perfect standard of justice. That is why the equality of the lot must be followed, in order to avoid the discontent of the people, and why we can only pray that God may direct the lot to the furtherance of justice: that is why we must necessarily use both kinds of equality, though we ought to use as little as possible the equality based on the chance of the lot" (757 D-E).

It is a difficulty of Plato's reasoning about equality, that it does not prove what we should expect it to prove. His argument for a true equality is based on the thesis, that capacity and desert should be recognised: the method he actually proposes for the election of the council is based on the recognition of wealth, and the principle actually followed is that offices and honour should be adjusted not to men's virtue or the virtue of their ancestors, or to bodily strength and beauty, but on the basis of wealth or poverty (*κατὰ πλούτου χρῆσιν ἢ πενίας*: 744 B-C). Yet the whole argument of the *Laws* shows that Plato was very far from holding the view—which alone would reconcile this contradiction—that wealth is identical with

[1] It is natural that Plato, particularly in the last phase of his life, when he was absorbed in number and mathematics, should advocate the idea of "proportionate representation" of desert (*ἀξία*). In the *Gorgias* it is Callicles, the advocate of the greater representation of might, who is first made to propound the idea (483 D); but it is also advocated, in a different sense (508 A), by Socrates (*cf. supra*, p. 139 n. 2).

capacity, or property with desert. It follows that his argument for a true equality rests on one basis, while the institution which he proposes rests on another. The inconsistency is natural. It is easy to feel at one time that in an ideal world a man should get what he deserves, and superior desert should receive superior recognition. It is easy to feel at another that men deserve what they get, and that the amount of their possessions is an index to their desert. Neither view can be accepted readily. It is impossible to measure desert, or to proportion the wage received to the quality of the work done; and even if it were possible, a world in which desert was always exactly recognised would be a worse world than that in which we live, where good work can be done, and is done daily, because men believe it good, and therefore well worth doing.[1] It is impossible, again, to believe that our gettings bear any necessary relation to our value, or that we should be measured, or take our station in the community, on the basis of possessions which, if they may be due to work and worth, may also be due, and are often largely due, to the chance of our opportunities. Whatever we may say of the economic world (whether, as we do now, we leave wages and prices to be mainly fixed by the degree in which buyers desire services and commodities, or whether here too we seek equality), it would seem that in the political world the only safe course is to seek equality of the sort which Plato described as false. The State, without affirming that all men are equal, should treat them, in its polling booth and its courts, as if they were equal. It cannot measure them by merit; if it measures them by wealth, it measures them by a criterion which is no index to their worth; if, again, it measures them by knowledge, it measures them by a criterion no more true. This may seem to reduce the principle of political equality to a mere matter of Hobson's choice; and we may seem to be seeking equality, if not "in order to avoid the discontent of the people," at any rate in order to avoid hard thinking. But equality has its deeper roots and its deeper justification. The State gives recognition and guarantees rights to persons. All men who are persons are, in the fundamental fact of personality, on the same level. The State which bases itself on this fundamental fact will be juster, as well as safer, than the State which bases itself on partial or accidental attributes.

The popular assembly, in addition to electing the council, elects also, by a general vote, but only from the ranks of the two first classes, the local officials of city and market (763 D-764 A); and it also elects the generals of the army. The generals, three in number, are to be elected, on the proposition of the guardians of the law, by all the members of the assembly who are of military age and over; but any man may propose a candidate of his own, in lieu of one of

[1] *Cf.* Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*, 2nd edition, pp. xxix-xxxi.

those proposed by the guardians, and if, on a preliminary ballot, a candidate thus proposed receives more votes than the official candidate, he is to be duly admitted to the final election (755 B-C).[1] Apart from its electoral functions, Plato assigns to the assembly three other rights. It has cognisance of public suits against those who have injured the State (768 A): its consent is necessary to any change in the law, if change should ever be necessary (772 D); and it has the power of giving resident aliens permission to stay in the country beyond the appointed period of twenty years (850 C). On the whole the assembly, as it is Solonian in composition, possesses also what may be called Solonian powers; and like the Athenian assembly after the legislation of Solon, it plays the double part of a popular electorate and a popular judicature. But it does not appear to possess any deliberative functions. The ship of State needs careful watching by day and by night; but a multitude can never discharge such a function with any vigour (758 B). It is the council which, during its annual tenure of office, is to undertake this duty. Following Athenian precedent (but the precedent of a later age than that of Solon), Plato proposes that the council should be divided into twelve parts, and that each of these should act for a month as the main organ of government and the presiding body in the State (*τὸ προκαθήμενον τῆς πόλεως*: 758 D). Like the Athenian "prytanies" these divisions, during their tenure of power, receive in audience foreigners and citizens; and like them, again, they convoke and dissolve the meetings of the assembly, ordinary and extraordinary, whether for elections or for justice or, it may be, for a change in the laws.[2]

The twelve divisions of the council are to act, each in its term, in conjunction with the executive magistrates. The executive magistrates are the guardians of the law, thirty-seven in number, elected, as we have seen, by the general assembly, and each holding office for twenty years. No man can be elected to the office until he is fifty years of age: no man can hold the office after he is seventy. The qualification of age suggests the Spartan Gerusia, whose members, according to Spartan law, must be over the age of sixty; and the number of the guardians of the law is also similar to that of the Gerontes,

[1] The constitution of the army, like the constitution of the State in general, is mixed. Like the generals, the colonels of the twelve tribal regiments are to be elected by popular vote (on the proposal of the generals); but the generals themselves are to appoint the captains of companies (756 A).

[2] While the popular assembly in the *Laws* corresponds to the Athenian assembly of Solon's time, being similarly divided into four classes, and possessing similar powers, the council corresponds rather to the council instituted at Athens by Cleisthenes, possessing similar powers and being similarly divided into prytanies. On the other hand there are two differences. The Cleisthenean council was elected according to tribes: the Platonic council is not elected on the basis of the twelve tribes, but on the basis of the four classes. Again, the Cleisthenean council was divided into ten prytanies: the Platonic (since Plato follows a duodecimal system) is divided into twelve, and is thus properly adjusted to the twelve months of the year.

who, including the two kings, numbered thirty.[1] It is curious to find executive officers holding office for twenty years; but we have to remember that the main function of the guardians, as their name indicates, is to ensure due observance of the law. They are also to keep the registers of personalty on which the four-class system is based.[2] Their president, if he may so be termed, is that one of their number who is charged with the care of education, and holds the office of Minister of Education (ἐπιμελητὴς τῆς παιδείας). He is to be elected from the ranks of the guardians of the law, on a secret vote, by a joint assembly of all the magistrates of the State; and he will hold his office for a term of five years. He must be the best of all the citizens in all respects (766 A); his office is far the greatest even among the highest offices of the State (765 E). It is not without significance that the 'prime minister' of Plato's State should be the minister of education.

In treating of the judicial institutions of his State (767-768), Plato begins by distinguishing private and public suits. For the former there are to be three instances and three grades of courts. The court of first instance is a voluntary court, or board of arbitration (956 B), composed of neighbours and friends who best know the question at issue; and of this Plato speaks as the court of "greatest competence". The court of second instance is the tribal court of each of the twelve territorial districts, for which the judges are to be chosen by lot, and in which the principle of a popular judicature is therefore recognised. That principle is one on which Plato lays emphasis; all should have a share in jurisdiction, for the man who does not share in the power of sitting with others in justice is apt to think himself utterly without any part in the State (768 B). The court of third and last instance is a court of select judges, who are annually chosen, one from each body of magistrates, by all the

[1] The number of the guardians of the law is curious. Thirty-seven has no numerical relation to 5040. Ritter, in his commentary on the *Laws* (p. 132, note) suggests that it is based on the tribes, each being represented by three, with an additional member to prevent an equal division in any voting; but this is purely a guess. Two further points are worth notice. (1) There were officers called νομοφύλακες at Sparta; but nothing is known of them. There were also νομοφύλακες at Athens, seven in number, whose duty it was to see to the observance of the law by the magistrates and in the assembly and council. The functions of Plato's νομοφύλακες thus correspond, in one essential point, to those of the Athenian; and it almost looks as if he had added the number (thirty), and the qualification of age, of the Spartan Gerontes to the number (seven) and the duties of the Athenian νομοφύλακες. If it is so, it is a curious instance of 'mixture'. (2) The only analogy that occurs to me for the twenty years' tenure of office of Plato's guardians is that of the Swiss Federal Executive, whose members, though they nominally hold office for the duration of a parliament, are almost always re-elected, and sometimes hold office for as many as twenty years.

[2] The guardians have also some power of changing the laws during the first twenty years of the State's existence (*cf. supra*, p. 304)—but the guardians who exercise this power will be those who are exceptionally appointed by the founders of the colony—and they have also a share in the jurisdiction of capital offences (see the next note).

magistrates of the State in conjunction.[1] The sittings of this court will be public; each judge will give his decision openly; and the joint board of magistrates by whom they have all been elected must attend the sittings of the court. Here again, if he does not adopt the Athenian system of large popular courts of law (with their hundreds, and sometimes their thousands, of judges), Plato attempts to mix some element, if not of popularity, at any rate of publicity. In public suits, in which there is apparently only one instance, he gives the trial almost wholly to the people. All are wronged when the State is wronged, and all will be aggrieved unless they have a voice in the decision. While, therefore, the examination of the case is reserved for three of the chief magistrates, to be agreed upon between the prosecutor and the defendant, the beginning and the end of the trial—the preliminary proceedings and the final decision—must rest with the public assembly.

The system of local government described by Plato (760 A-764 C) is necessarily slight: a State of 5040 citizens can need little beyond its central government. In the central city there are to be both city inspectors and inspectors of the market square: in the country there are to be rural inspectors for every tribe. The latter, five in number, are to be elected by their tribe, and to hold office for two years. Their functions, in some respects, are like those of the Justices of the Peace in the old English system of local government. Like them, they have a petty jurisdiction; like them, they are a general board of administration. Unlike the English justices, the five inspectors of each tribe are each to choose a dozen young men for companions and associates, whom it is largely their function to train (*cf. infra*, p. 379): unlike them, again, they are not tied to one territorial district. It is the duty of each set of inspectors, with their sixty young associates, to make a double tour of the whole State during their tenure of office, from left to right in one year, and from right to left in the next, spending one month in each district as they go, so that they and their companions may acquire an abundant knowledge of all the country. While they are thus on circuit, they are to be busily occupied in requisitioning and in superintending whatever labour is necessary for the making of trenches to defend the country, the building of roads, the provision of a proper supply of water, and the creation of works of irrigation. The duties of the city and market inspectors are less onerous; but the importance of the central city makes their office also important. The three city inspectors, therefore, are only to be chosen from the first class, and the five market inspectors only from the first two classes; but any citizen may propose a candidate, and every citizen must vote in a

[1] Later, in Book IX, 855 E, Plato speaks of jurisdiction in capital offences as resting with the guardians of the law and a court selected on the basis of merit from the magistrates of the previous year.

preliminary selection by which the original candidates are reduced to a number double that of the number of officials to be chosen, while the final choice is left to the arbitrament of the lot. The city inspectors are concerned with the care of the city, its buildings, its roads and its water supply: the market inspectors superintend the market-square and its buildings and business; but both possess a petty jurisdiction.

The general lines of this system of local government follow Athenian precedent. In many other features, as we have seen, the constitutional structure of the State of the *Laws* is Athenian in character. The council and the general assembly are Athenian: the four-class system is that of Solonian Athens: the division of the State into twelve tribes, and of the council into twelve prytanies, recalls the Athens of Cleisthenes. On the other hand the social system of the *Laws* is Spartan rather than Athenian. The method of training, the system of common tables, the position of women, are all "bred out of the Spartan kind". The *Laws* is more critical of Sparta than the *Republic*, but the Spartan example is still present to Plato. We may almost describe the State of the *Laws* as a mixture of Athenian constitutional forms and Athenian liberty with the social system and stable order of Sparta. It is a mixed State in many senses, but not least in the sense that it is a combination of the two opposite types among the contemporary States of Greece.[1]

The General Character of the Government in the Laws

Such is the system of local government and the constitution of the State described in the sixth book of the *Laws*. Before we turn to the additions made to this system in the twelfth book, we shall do well to consider the system as it stands. There is a popular assembly, an elected council, and an executive of guardians of the law: there are military officials, courts of justice, and local officials. The assembly is constituted on a system of classes, and a distinction is drawn between the classes which must, and those which may, attend; but every citizen is a member, and every citizen may vote in all its meetings. The council, whose monthly divisions are the presiding body in the State, is elected on a system which combines regard for wealth with regard for universal suffrage, and the use of the election with the use of the lot. The guardians of the law would appear to be freely elected by all the citizens, and from all the citizens, without distinction. But the military officials are partly recruited by popular election, and partly by nomination: the courts of law, while they contain an element of special knowledge in the select judges, are

[1] This is indicated by the very *dramatis personæ*—the Athenian Stranger, who takes the leading part, and the Spartan Megillus, who is naturally linked with the Cretan Cleinias in view of the close connection between the institutions of Crete and those of Sparta.

largely based on the principle of a popular judicature; and the local officials of the city and market are elected not indeed from all, but at any rate by all. Throughout, therefore, the element of wisdom, as represented by the upper classes, is given a special representation; throughout, also, the element of liberty, as represented by the whole body of citizens, is given a free field for operation, and every citizen who so desires may cast his vote. The difficulty implicit in the system is that the two higher classes, who are only higher in the sense that they possess a greater amount of personalty, are made to appear as the representatives of wisdom; but apart from that difficulty, the system is consistent, thorough-going, and careful to the verge of complication. The elements are so mixed in the whole State that it may seem hard to describe it as either a democracy or an aristocracy or an oligarchy. Plato, as he is the first, appears to be also the most thorough philosopher of that mixed form of constitution, which Aristotle advocates in the fourth book of the *Politics*, Polybius in the sixth book of his history, and Montesquieu in the eleventh book of the *Esprit des Lois*.

Aristotle, while himself an advocate of the mixed constitution, is a critic of the form of the mixed constitution advocated by Plato.[1] It is liable, he thinks, to various objections. In the first place, it is based on the assumption that the best constitution should be a blend of democracy and tyranny, which are either no constitutions at all, or the worst of all constitutions: in the next place, a mixture of several constitutions is better than one of two; and finally, there is no monarchical element at all in Plato's State, which is really a union of oligarchy and democracy, with a bias in favour of the former. Some of this criticism is far from just or even pertinent. Far from mixing tyranny with extreme democracy, as Aristotle implies, Plato, as we have seen (*supra*, p. 312), is careful to explain that it is only the better side of monarchy which he desires to mix with the better side of democracy. By the better side of monarchy he means the principle of the rule of intelligence: by the better side of democracy he means the principle of popular control. He uses monarchy in a

[1] *Politics*, II. 6, § 8, 1266, a 4-7. It should be noticed that Aristotle's criticisms of the *Laws* in Book II of the *Politics*, while they are occasionally just and serious, are sometimes external and inaccurate. It is somewhat curious that this should be the case, in view of the fact that in Books VII and VIII, in which he sketches an ideal State, Aristotle follows the *Laws* very closely (see the Excursus at the end of the last chapter). It helps to show, what there are other reasons for believing, that the *Politics* is composed of separate sets of lectures, which are somewhat disconnected. What is said in the text may suffice to prove the external character of some of Aristotle's criticisms of the *Laws*; but it may be added as an example that he criticises (in II. 6, §§ 15-16; 1265, b 24-6) the very system of a double holding which he afterwards adopts himself. The inaccuracy of some of his criticisms appears in the statement that Plato seeks to equalise landed property without providing for any regulation of the number of the citizens (II. 6, § 10: 1265, a 38-42), and also in the suggestion that Plato neglects to consider foreign relations and the provision of sufficient military defence (II. 6, §§ 7-8: 1256, a 20-8).

sense so wide, that it includes both the rule of one and the rule of a few; and in mixing monarchy, thus understood, with democracy, he is really creating that mixture of several constitutions which Aristotle desired. He is blending the principle of intelligent government with that of popular control; and these, after all, are the only two principles between which choice can lie, or of which any mixture can be made. On the other hand, there is a basis of very real truth in the last of Aristotle's objections. In the ordinary sense of the word, there is really no element of monarchy in Plato's State. In the ordinary sense of the word, there certainly is a very considerable element of oligarchy. Plato's principles do not square with his practice; and when, in practice, he identifies wisdom with wealth, he really turns the rule of intelligence into that rule of wealth which he himself, like Aristotle, considers to be the essence of oligarchy. Even in the literal sense of the word oligarchy, the State of the *Laws* can hardly be said to be other than a mixture of oligarchy with democracy; for the members of the first, and even those of the second class, will necessarily be 'the Few,' and those of the third, and still more of the fourth, will as necessarily be 'the Many'. Nor is Aristotle really unfair in his further contention, that Plato's State has a bias in favour of oligarchy; that while the rich are forced to attend the assembly, the poor are free to abstain; that offices such as those of the city and market inspectors are open to the upper, but not to the lower classes; that the method of electing the council gives a premium to wealth. It is a device common in oligarchies, Aristotle explains, when he comes, in a later book of the *Politics*, to analyse their nature, that the rich should be fined and the poor go unpunished for failure to attend the assembly or to discharge other civic duties; but it is a device which is only meant to make some show of popular liberty, and its real intention is always to concentrate power *de facto* in the hands of the few (iv. 13, § 1-4: 1297 a 14-35). The criticism of Aristotle, that Plato's State is biased in favour of oligarchy, involves a complementary criticism, that it is biased against democracy. Such a criticism, though it is not expressly made by Aristotle, is certainly possible. In spite of a wealth of ingenious devices, and in spite of all Plato's concession of nominal powers, the popular assembly remains something of a shadow. The multitude can never watch the ship of State with any vigour (758 B): the true judgment in matters of art, and (it would also appear) in matters of politics, is that of the aristocracy of intelligence and education (658 E-659 C: 701 A-B). The element in the individual soul which feels pain and pleasure is like the people or masses in a State: as it is folly in an individual, when his desires do not obey reason and knowledge (689 A-B), so it is folly in a State, when the masses do not obey their rulers and the laws. It is hard to reconcile these sayings with any real belief in democracy. If Plato gives the people the power of electing officials, when he can hardly have imagined

that they had sufficient wisdom to detect capacity, the gift is really made to "avoid the discontent of the people". We must judge the State of the *Laws* less by the machinery of its institutions than by the spirit which pervades it. If we do so, we may conclude that the mixed constitution is not a real organic mixture, in which all the elements compounded are active, but rather a combination of popular elements which are mainly passive with an active and directive upper class. This is a fundamental criticism ; and it is one which Aristotle made, not so much in the second book, where he directly criticises the *Laws*, as in third, where he states his view of the masses. They represent, he urges, a faculty of collective judgment, in virtue of which they can judge in matters of art, and may equally claim to judge in matters of politics, choosing their rulers freely, and calling their rulers freely to account. Here Aristotle touches that belief in the sovereignty of public opinion, or 'the general will,' which Plato never accepts, and which, even in the *Laws*, where he seems for a while to accept it, is only accepted nominally, and is ultimately rejected.

The Change of Tone in the Twelfth Book of the Laws

Already, even in the earlier books of the *Laws*, the note is struck which, in the twelfth book, becomes fully dominant. The principle of the rule of knowledge is definitely affirmed in passages such as those which have just been quoted ; and if in practice the rule of knowledge seems to be modified, partly by its identification with the rule of wealth, and partly by its combination with the play of liberty in a mixed constitution, there is a large range of social life in which it is still left operative in its purity. Supervision is one of the notes of the *Laws*. Property is limited : marriage is controlled ; and in one passage (730 D-E), in which he speaks of the man who informs the rulers of the wrong-doing of others as worth many men, and of those who co-operate with the rulers in correcting other citizens as yet more worthy, Plato seems to contemplate a system of mutual espionage and mutual censorship. The poet, the dramatist, the musician, are all brought under control (*infra*, p. 370) : liberty may find some scope in politics, but it finds little scope in the field of art ; and with all its regulation of life the State of the *Laws* has some of the features of a *Polizeistaat*. We are hardly surprised, therefore, when in the last book the veil is lifted, and we see clearly the figures, hitherto hidden, of guiding and controlling wisdom. Here the normal Greek institutions of assembly and council, officials and courts of laws, which appeared in the earlier books, begin to fade away ; and instead there appears a nocturnal council of philosophers, or rather of philosophic astronomers, who guide the State because they know the mysteries of the heavens. Here too the law-state, rigid in character, unalter-

able in its rules, to which Plato has hitherto sought to ascribe the stability of an Egyptian Pyramid, unchanged and unchanging through the centuries, begins to dissolve; and the outlines of a State based on the free play of reason and guided by "genuine free mind" reveal themselves in its place. It is this which makes Aristotle say that while professing to found a State generally acceptable, Plato veers gradually round to the old ideal of the *Republic.*[1]

The first new body of officials to be revealed in the twelfth book is the examiners or censors (εὐθυνταί), whose function it is to examine the conduct of the other magistrates during their tenure of office. Such examination was a general institution in Greece: both executive officials and members of the council had responsibility brought home to them, and had to give an account (λόγον διδόναι) of their term of office, not only in democratic States (though the institution was especially characteristic of democracies), but also in States under aristocratic or oligarchical government.[2] Generally the examination had to be undergone at the end of the term of office and within thirty days of its termination; but it might sometimes be imposed from month to month, or, if less frequently, at any rate from time to time during the tenure of office. The officials who held the examination (generally termed εὔθυνοι or λογισταί, or, as at Corinth, νομοφύλακες) might have power not only to hear evidence, but also to give the final decision; or they might, as was generally the case, merely collect the evidence on the basis of which a court of law eventually decided. We might have expected that the νομοφύλακες of Plato's State, as it is their function to guard the laws, would conduct the examination of all other magistrates.[3] Plato, however, creates a new and superior magistracy which is to exercise a censorship over all others, and which, just because it is of surpassing importance, is to be filled by men who surpass all others in merit (945 C). He provides that in every year each citizen shall nominate any citizen over the age of fifty whom he considers best in character and conduct. From a certain number (but Plato does not explain the number), consisting of those who have received the highest

[1] *Politics*, II. 6, § 4 (1265, a 2-4).

[2] *Cf.* Hermann-Swoboda, *Lehrbuch*, I, III. pp. 152-4. It may be added that δοκιμασία, or preliminary examination before entry on office, especially for those officials who were appointed by lot, was also a regular Greek institution. Such a preliminary examination is required by Plato, in Book VI of the *Laws*, for the guardians of the law (753 E, 755 D), for the council (763 E), for the director of education (766 B), for the generals (755 D), for the inspectors of the market (763 E), and for the select judges (767 D). But the εὐθύνη, or final examination on the termination of office, is not suggested till the twelfth book.

[3] It is difficult to see how the guardians of the law can be supervised (as apparently they are to be) by the examiners: for they, like the examiners, are elected to their office at the age of fifty or more, and they hold office for twenty years. The whole relation of the guardians of the law to the examiners is not clear. As a matter of fact, the latter seem to usurp the place of the former.

quota of votes in this preliminary nomination, one-half is to be chosen by a further vote; and from this half, again, three are to be elected by a final vote.[1] The three thus elected are to hold the office of examiner till the age of seventy-five; and the college of examiners, thus annually recruited by three new members, will be a body of the best citizens, with a possible number of seventy-five members and a probable number of forty, all over the age of fifty, which supervises all the administration of the State.[2] It is the function of the college to keep all the magistrates in the one way of justice, and so to preserve the unity of the State. If it fails, and the magistrates pull in different directions, the city will be full of dissensions, and will become many instead of one (945 D-E). Its members, accordingly, have the power of life and death over all magistrates, though an appeal lies from their decision to the court of select judges (946 D). As is their power, so too is to be their honour. They sit in the chief seats in all public assemblies; the one of the three annually elected examiners who receives the greatest number of votes is to give his name to the year; and when an examiner dies, he is buried with a solemn grandeur. His bier is borne to the tomb in the early morning, with full military pomp, accompanied by a choir of boys singing the national anthem (τὸ πάτριον μέλος); his tomb is an oblong vaulted chamber underground, where stone couches stand side by side; and round the tomb there is to rise a mound crowned by a grove of trees (947).

The examiners, however, are not the summit of the Platonic State, whatever their power or dignity. They are men who excel all others in character and conduct; but the summit of Plato's State, if Plato is true to himself and his own fundamental principles, must necessarily be a body of men who excel all others in knowledge and in philosophic insight—in a grasp of the meaning of the heavens, and the earth, and their mutual concordance. This body he finds, or constructs, in the shape of a nocturnal council. The appearance of the nocturnal council seems to result, almost incidentally, from a discussion of the relation of the State of the *Laws* to those of the outer world. Unrestricted intercourse with other States would lead to evil com-

[1] Gomperz (*Greek Thinkers*, E.T., III. pp. 250-1) speaks of the method of election of the censors as resembling "the most modern schemes . . . proportional representation and the representation of the minority": it combines "the second ballot and the principle of the *vote unique*". This seems loose writing. There is nothing in their election different from the election of the guardians of the law or the councillors, except that it is less complicated.

[2] The number of the college of examiners would be seventy-five, if all of its members lived to the age of seventy-five. That, of course, is improbable; and the college would on an average be a body of forty or less. Ritter, *op. cit.*, p. 363, states the average number as fifteen. He seems to assume that the average age of election is about 60, and the average age of death about 65—with the result that the average tenure of office is about 5 years. It seems to me more reasonable to assume that the average tenure of office is about 12 years, and that therefore (3 members being elected each year) the number of members of the college is upwards of 40.

munications and corrupt the good manners of the State (949 E). On the other hand any attempt at complete isolation is impossible; and even if it were possible it would be regarded by the rest of the world as barbarous.[1] It is an error in a State to pay no heed to the reputation in which it is held by other States. Those who are removed from goodness themselves can judge with an accurate instinct the goodness of others; and a good man will always desire to bear a good reputation. What is true of men is (here at any rate) true also of States; and a good State will desire to have a good reputation among other States. It will show itself to other States at its best; when it permits its members to travel, and to carry with them on their travels the reputation of their State, it will be careful to send abroad the best of its citizens. The State which Plato has built will accordingly send to the international congresses of the Greek world, at Olympia and other places of festival, the citizens by whom it would choose to be judged, and so "win a glory the reverse of that which is won in war" (951 A), gaining a reputation not by the force of its arms, but by the merit of its ambassadors. These will be public envoys; but the State will also send private citizens abroad as 'spectators,' provided they gain the leave of the guardians of the law. These spectators will study other cities and their laws; and comparing them with their own, they will enter into possession of their own laws no longer by habit only, but through that full understanding which is the only way of entering into full possession of the spirit of law and attaining a full civility of life.[2] Nor will the spectators confine their studies to institutions only. There are always in the world some few men of a divine quality, who arise no less in badly ordered than in good States, and whom men ought to seek out by land and sea, in order that they may learn from them to corroborate whatever is strong, and correct whatever is defective, in the laws of their own State.[3] Here speaks the Plato who had travelled and seen the world; and here, too, speaks the Plato who had embraced philosophy, which is the 'spectator of time and existence'.

The spectator, when he has held office for ten years, or less, between the age of fifty and that of sixty, must make a 'relation' to his State, as the envoys of Venice made *relazioni* to their Senate; and

[1] This implies a condemnation of Sparta and the Spartan habit of expelling strangers periodically (ξενηλασία).

[2] In spite of Aristotle's criticism (*Politics*, II. 6, § 7; 1265, a 20-5) Plato is not oblivious of 'foreign relations'. But he considers these relations in peace, and not in war, and with a view to moral rather than material gain. His suggestion that a State should study carefully the institutions of other States finds something of a fulfilment in such things as blue-books on the methods of education, or systems of poor relief, in other countries.

[3] It is possible to suspect some reference to the Academy and to the teaching which it gave in contemporary Athens. If there is such a reference, it may seem vainglorious; but there are passages in the *Laws*, and in some of the genuine *Epistles*, which are couched in a similar tone.

the body to which he makes his relation is to be the nocturnal council (so called because it meets between dawn and sunrise), which shall listen to his experiences and the lessons they suggest, and act accordingly (951 D-E). The nocturnal council thus introduced has already been mentioned incidentally by Plato in the tenth book, where it is said to have its place of meeting near "the House of Reformation," and its members are mentioned as conversing, for the sake of their reformation, with the heretics who are undergoing imprisonment in that House (908 A). Here the nocturnal council has some of the features of a Dominican Inquisition. In the twelfth book it appears as a society of philosophers, considering and discussing the true way of life, partly in the light of the 'relations' of the 'spectators,' and partly in the light of philosophy—a philosophy which is one of number and astronomy.[1] The basis of its composition, like the basis of so much else in the *Laws*, is the principle of mixture; but the elements mixed are no longer different social classes, but different ages and different stages of experience and outlook on life. One-half of the council is *ex officio*, and consists of the higher officials of the State, who, since the offices they hold are only open to men over the age of fifty, will necessarily be advanced in years. To this half belong the examiners, who are all entitled to seats, and are all over the age of fifty; the ten eldest guardians of the laws, who will be between sixty and seventy years of age; the minister of education, who must necessarily be over the age of fifty, along with his predecessors in office, who may well be upwards of seventy; and finally those of the 'spectators' who have proved themselves worthy of membership, who again, as a rule, will be men of sixty years and upwards. So far the council is a body of grey-beards; and indeed the whole government of the State, of which the council is a microcosm, may seem, so far as it has hitherto been described, a gerontocracy. But a plan which Plato has already suggested in the sixth book, where he associates with each of the five inspectors of each country district twelve young companions (760 B), is also adopted for the nocturnal council, and introduces a new and important element into its composition. Each of the *ex officio* mem-

[1] It is possible to detect hints of such a body in the earlier books of the *Laws*. In Book I, 632 C, the legislator is said to appoint as guardians some who walk by wisdom, and others who walk by true opinion only. This passage, however, gives at the best a very shadowy hint. Ritter, in his commentary on the *Laws*, pp. 45 *sqq*., would trace another hint in the passage of Book II (664 C-D), in which Plato seeks to associate choruses of different ages to sing the identity of righteousness and happiness, just as in the nocturnal council of Book XII he associated different ages together in philosophic study. Again in Book VII, 817 E-818 B, where the studies of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy are mentioned, it is suggested that these are studies not for all, but for a few—"and who they are, we will explain as we go on, towards the end". As a regular and formal political institution, however, the nocturnal council, though it may be vaguely adumbrated in earlier books, is none the less peculiar to the twelfth book, and in the nature of an addendum which it is difficult to co-ordinate with the political institutions previously described. It is almost impossible, for instance, to correlate the nocturnal council with the ordinary council of the earlier books, which was to control the State and its magistrates.

bers is to choose a young associate, between the age of thirty and that of forty; and this associate, if the rest agree, is to become a regular member of the council (961 B).[1] The old, who have had experience of administrative affairs, or travelled and seen the world, will thus be aided by the fire and vigour of youth; and in this way Plato would seek to satisfy the old sigh after the unattainable—*si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait.* Youth will strengthen the hands and ease the stiffness of old age: it will prevent the rise of a bureaucracy which would be all the worse because it was also a gerontocracy. Age, again, will add its wisdom and its philosophic lore to the mere instinct and opinion of youth. Not only so, but the young will have a chance of distinguishing themselves in debate with their elders, and of showing by the part which they play in the council their qualifications for office; while the rest of the city will be able to watch all those who acquit themselves creditably, and promote them to office according to their deserts (952 B). Nor is the council only a training-ground and a testing-place for the young: it is also a bond of union between the older officials. It links together the various magistracies: it is, as it were, a cabinet which connects and correlates the activities of various departments—the minister of education, the examiners, the guardians of the law. Finally, with its experienced officials, its young associates, and its travelled spectators, the council will be the brain and controlling mind of the whole State. As such it will survey the whole sphere of law, holding discourse concerning laws at home and any good laws which may be found abroad. It will also, Plato suggests, discuss all branches of study (μαθήματα) which throw light on the subject of law; and these, if the old members so direct, the young associates must be set to learn with diligence (951 E-952 A).[2]

The nocturnal council, we have said, is the directing mind of the State. Every living body, Plato argues, needs mind for its direction; and mind, again, needs the senses of sight and hearing for its aid and information. The body politic needs for its direction the mind embodied in the nocturnal council; and that council needs, for its

[1] Plato does not explain the composition of the council very exactly. Taking together the two passages in which it is mentioned (951 D-E and 961 A-B), one may conjecture that it includes (1) the ten older guardians of the laws; (2) all the examiners. to the number of forty or less; (3) the minister of education for the time being, with two or three of his predecessors in office; (4) a certain number of the 'spectators'. This gives a total of more than fifty members over the age of fifty; and as each of these has a young associate, the total number of the council will be 100 and upwards. (Ritter, only reckoning fifteen examiners, makes the number of older members about thirty-two, and the total number of the council from sixty-five to eighty).

[2] Some slight analogy to Plato's nocturnal council may be found in the Hebdomadal Council at Oxford. The eighteen ordinary members of this body are of an average age of nearly sixty; but the two proctors, who are members for their term of office, are limited by a rule of standing which generally means that they are under forty (but over thirty) years of age. Plato's suggestion that the young should be associated with the old in government may be defended on the ground that governing bodies, in modern as in ancient societies, are often recruited from men who are already advanced in years when they join the government. This may ensure wisdom, but it makes for conservatism, and tends to throw the young into the ranks of revolution.

aid and information, the eyes and ears of the "younger guardians,"[1] who see and hear all the doings of the State (964 B). Now mind, in its nature, always pursues a single aim. The senses see and hear many things, and are manifold themselves; mind is one, and its aim and object is always one (*cf. supra*, p. 189). Like mind in general, the mind politic must pursue, and to pursue it must know, the one aim which is set before it, and the only means which makes the realisation of that aim possible. The one aim which is set before each State is goodness—not wealth, not liberty, and least of all liberty for itself combined with tyranny over other States (962 D-E); and goodness, again, is itself a unity—not a sum or plurality of different qualities, courage and wisdom, self-control and justice, but a single and unitary quality, in which all these qualities are blended, and which must be known as a unity if it is ever to be attained. The only means, therefore, which makes the attainment of goodness possible is knowledge of the unity of goodness:[2] the only way in which the political aim of goodness can ever be secured for a State is through the rule of statesmen who have learned to know its unity. Without such knowledge a man can hardly be called a ruler at all (962 B): he who cannot acquire it, in addition to the ordinary virtues, can hardly ever be a proper ruler of a whole State, though he may serve under others in a subordinate capacity (968 A). But if goodness is to be known as a unity, and if its one true Form or Idea is to be abstracted from the many and various shapes in which it appears, a training of more than ordinary exactitude is required (965 A-D). All things are reduced to unity in God. It is in Him and through Him that goodness is a unity. He who would know the unity of goodness must therefore know God. Only when we have learned to see the universe as a whole, and ourselves as parts of it with our allotted places; only when we have learned to know how His eternal mind pervades that whole, and imbues and sustains our minds in their several functions—only then can we see the unity of goodness, and the unity of all things, in His divine purpose.[3] The training which will bring us to the knowledge of God, and therefore to the knowledge of the unity of goodness, is the training which comes from the study of astronomy. It is a mistake to think that astronomy leads to atheism, because it leads men to see nothing in the world but matter actuated by necessary laws of

[1] Plato uses this phrase (τῶν φυλάκων τοὺς νέους); but the reference is probably to the younger members of the nocturnal council. This illustrates the fact that we must not press isolated phrases in the *Laws* too far—a remark which bears on the interpretation of such passages as 739-740 (*cf. supra*, p. 319 n. 1 (2)).

[2] Here Plato recurs to an old thesis, which he had apparently abandoned in the *Politicus* (*supra*, p. 281 n. 2).

[3] Plato argues at the end of the *Laws* (1) that the true statesman must know the unity of goodness (963 B-966 A), and (2) that he ought to have the knowledge of God, which is the noblest kind of knowledge (966 B-968 A). I have sought to establish a connection between these two arguments by using the teaching of Book X (especially 903).

motion. That is a false astronomy, which setting matter before mind, or rather eliminating mind altogether, perverts the order of the universe. True astronomy is the opposite. It leads men to see that mind—which is prior to all matter, "the eldest and most divine of all things"—sways all the motions of the heavens: it teaches us that those motions, in their regular order and perfect beauty, are proofs of a directing mind itself no less regular and no less perfect. To understand God and goodness we must learn to understand the heavens. We must learn to comprehend the mind that moves in the stars and is the cause of being; we must learn to know the branches of study that are preparatory to such comprehension; we must learn to see music in its fellowship with these; and then we must learn to use all we have comprehended, all we have known, all we have seen, in all its full concordance, for the guidance of men's habits and their customs. This is that same *concordantia divina* of which Nicolas of Cusa wrote; and it is in virtue of a grasp of this concordance that the nocturnal council must guide and govern the State.

The end of the *Laws* is thus a return to the doctrines of the *Republic*, couched in a new and astronomical form, with astronomy and number taking the place of dialectic and the Idea. Once more Plato turns to the rule of "genuine free mind," of which in earlier books he had almost despaired, and for which he had sought to substitute the rule of law: once more he turns to the ideal of unity in place of that of compromise and mixture; once more he turns to a scheme of philosophic training, and, with it, to the sovereignty of philosopher-kings. The nocturnal council is the 'perfect guardians' of the Republic, turned collegiate and set to control, in ways that are never explained, a system of political machinery into which they are never fitted. The more exact training necessary for the council is adumbrated at the end of the *Laws*, as the higher education necessary for the perfect guardians is suggested in the sixth book of the *Republic*; but while the outlines of the higher education of the guardians are fully sketched in the seventh book of the *Republic*, the details of the more exact training required for the nocturnal council are never drawn out in the *Laws*. The Athenian stranger promises, at the end of the dialogue, to "run the danger" of stating his views on education, which is "the subject raised again by the course of the argument" (969 A); but with this promise the *Laws* comes to an end, halting, as it were, on the threshold of the last room which remains to be explored. If, however, we treat the *Epinomis* (or "appendix to the *Laws*") as a Platonic work (and in spirit at any rate it is Platonic), we may find some fulfilment of the promise made at the end of the *Laws*.[1] Once more the speakers are the Athenian

[1] Professor Burnet (*Greek Philosophy*, p. 8) speaks of the *Epinomis* as Platonic. He remarks that the name stereometry is first applied in the *Epinomis* to the study of things in three dimensions—a study first mentioned, in general terms, in the seventh book of the *Republic*—and that the reference in the *Epinomis* to stereometry is a

Stranger, Megillus and Cleinias; and the question they discuss is "What is wisdom, and by what training shall she be found?" Wisdom is the art of number, the Athenian Stranger replies; for without that art mankind is furthest removed from wisdom and discretion (976 D-E). With number dwell wisdom and all good things; and things that are evil are things without number and measure (978 A-B). The art of number is the gift of God; and He is Heaven—the heavenly mind which turns the stars in their orbits, and gives them their seasons and sustenance (977 A-B). The regular motion of the heavens according to number is a plain proof that they have wisdom and are possessed of mind; for mind is constant and stable, and the constancy of the heavens proves not that they are matter, revolving in obedience to "the laws of matter," but that they are mind, acting with the stability of all true mind (982). He who knows the wisdom of the mind that moves in the heavens has found wisdom; and the way of wisdom is thus astronomy—that true and high astronomy, which is not merely content, like the peasant in Hesiod, to watch the rising and the setting of the stars, but studies the reasons of their movements and contemplates the mind by which they are moved (990 A). He who studies after this manner will grasp the unity of the universe. "Every diagram, each system of number, every scheme of harmony and all the consonance in the revolution of the stars, must needs be revealed as one, through all their manifestations, to the student in this school; and revealed indeed they will be, if he studies rightly with an eye to the One; for thought will reveal to him the existence of the one bond that links them all together" (991 E). In this way will men attain wisdom, and with wisdom they will attain happiness. Few, indeed, can attain this height; but when those few have reached it by their labours and come to the goal of old age, they must have the highest offices given into their hands. The rest must follow in their train, with thanksgiving to all the gods: "the nocturnal council, when they know and have tested us properly, must summon us all to wisdom" (992).

Thus Plato is Plato still, even to the last. He did not, after all, end on a note of compromise, or with a belief in the 'second best' and the mixed constitution and all the workaday world of ordinary political machinery.[1] The State of the *Laws*, like that of the

development of a passage in the *Theætetus* (pp. 225, 323). That the *Epinomis* accords closely with the *Laws* does not necessarily prove that it was written by the author of the *Laws;* but it also agrees (on other points than the mention of stereometry) with other Platonic writings (*cf.* for instance, the reference in 975 A to primitive ἀλληλοφαγία ζῶν ζῴων with *Protagoras*, 326 D *sqq.*, where the word ἀλληλοφθορία occurs, and *Politicus*, 274 B *sqq.*).

[1] It seems impossible, and I have not attempted, to reconcile the twelfth book of the *Laws* with the sixth and following books. It does not follow that we must, like Bruns (*Platos Gesetze*) and other German critics, conclude that there are two strata in the *Laws*, or dichotomise the dialogue, in the usual fashion of higher criticism, into two separate treatises. Nor need we, as Ritter in his *Kommentar* seeks to do, use our ingenuity to discover in the earlier books anticipations of the twelfth, or to fit that book

Republic, becomes, in the issue, an ensample laid up in the heavens —or rather, the earthly antitype of the polity of the heavens where the stars move in measure through the operation of mind, which is the first and only mover of all created things. To some the end of the *Laws*, and still more the *Epinomis*, may seem fantastic, and Plato may appear to have fallen, in his old age, into a form of mathematical mysticism. But this is perhaps a harsh and erroneous verdict.[1] Mathematical mysticism is not the ultimate note of the *Laws*. The astronomy of which Plato speaks is less astronomy than theology; and his mysticism is really an ardent rationalism, which leads him to find a rational mind behind all movement and existence. The last word of his political theory is in effect theocracy. The State which he envisages in the last book of the *Laws* is a State guided by a religious assembly, which acts in the light of a divine truth won from the study of astronomy. It was the time of sunset and evening star, and the grey-haired Plato lifted his eyes

χρύσειον ἐς ἑσπέριον χόρον ἄστρων.[2]

Mind, he believed, directed all these solemn goings. God, he believed, had given men, through the apprehension of number, the key to this splendour of truth in the heavens; and men must translate the measure and the music of the spheres into the goings of their cities. This, as has been said, may remind us of Nicolas of Cusa. It may also remind us of the mediæval papacy, which sought to mould human life into concordance with a divine truth won not from any contemplation of the stars, but from faith in the revelation of the Son of Man.[3] The end of the *Laws* is the

into the scheme of these earlier books. Plato, when he wrote the last book of the *Laws*, was not of the same mind as when he wrote the earlier books; and dying before the work was finished, he did not reconcile the two parts, nor can we do what he did not do himself. It is hardly the way of Plato to be consistent, but rather to rise in flights, from level to level, without reconciling one level with another. As he flies higher, the sub-ideal of the earlier part of the *Laws* becomes an ideal State; and that is perhaps the best conclusion of the whole matter.

[1] It may seem to us an idle dream that number or ratio, square or cube, or any formula of mathematics whatsoever, should ever bring us nearer to the veiled first cause of things. But in early days, when the first epoch-making discoveries in mathematics were being made, it was readily possible to see in number a skeleton key, and to hope, by discovering the proportion between the different physical elements, and the rates and relations of different motions, to explain existence. In any case the emphasis which Plato lays on number is nothing new in the *Laws*: it appears already in the nuptial number of the *Republic*, and was always an element in his thought. A parallel may be traced with Hobbes (and other physico-mathematical thinkers of the seventeenth century), who regarded geometry as the only science revealed by God to men. But there is a fundamental difference. Hobbes, totally unlike Plato, believes that the "necessary laws" of motion explain and account for mind: he belongs to the school rebuked by Plato (*infra*, p. 364).

[2] *Anth. Pal.*, ix. 270.

[3] Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.
. . . .
Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water
Not of Gennesareth, but of Thames!

—FRANCIS THOMPSON.

beginning of the Middle Ages. This is true not only of the twelfth book, but of all the last three books. Even the astronomical theology, which finds its highest expression in the great tenth book,[1] passed into the mediæval Church, through the medium of a famous chapter in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle; and Dante's confession of faith

> Credo in uno Dio
> Solo ed eterno, che tutto 'l ciel muove,
> Non moto

came, through Aristotle, ultimately from Plato—the Plato of the *Laws*.[2] The advocacy of religious persecution, which is one of the striking features of the tenth book, is no less mediæval; and the nocturnal council, which discourses with heretics for their reformation, has its analogy, as was said above, with the Dominican Inquisition. The State of the *Republic*, and that of the *Laws*, are ideals; but they are ideals which, for a time, and in a degree, were realised. The mediæval Church was the place of that realisation. Partly by its structure, with its papal monarchy corresponding to the philosopher-king, and its hierarchy of priests, monks, and laity corresponding to the three classes of Plato; partly in its function, and its attempt to fashion life into an external order or scheme controlled by one divine Idea, the Roman Church turned Plato's ideal (and in some measure turns it even still) into an actual and living institution.[3]

[1] The tenth book of the *Laws* is in many ways the highest expression of pre-Christian theology. Ritter, in the preface to his *Platos Gesetze* (*Darstellung des Inhalts*), p. v, quotes a French writer's description of it as "le catechisme des hommes religieux en Grèce jusqu'aux temps chrétiens," and remarks that Eusebius, in his *Præparatio Evangelica*, seeks to answer the argument of the *Laws* point by point.

[2] The chapter in the *Metaphysics* is Λ 7 (1072, a 19–1072, b 30). It is translated by Robert Bridges, in his anthology *The Spirit of Man*, No. 39. The reference to Dante (*Paradiso*, xxiv.) is given in his note. It should be added that the Middle Ages knew the *Timæus* (which, indeed, was practically the only work of Plato known directly to the Middle Ages), and drew its cosmology largely from that source, as well as through Aristotle.

[3] I may be permitted to refer to my chapter on mediæval unity in *The Unity of Western Civilisation* (edited by F. S. Marvin), pp. 90-121. What I have said there is largely based on one of the finest books I know—Tröltsch's *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen*, especially pp. 232-4 (*cf.* also Ritter's preface to his *Darstellung*, pp. v-vii). The analogy, as Tröltsch remarks, between Plato and the mediæval Church is spontaneous. The Church did not copy Plato: its own principles made it *naturaliter Platonica* (*cf. infra*, p. 385).

Chapter XVI

THE *LAWS* AND ITS THEORY OF LAW

OF Plato's general view of law something has already been said. Of the specific reforms of contemporary Greek law which he suggests it is hardly necessary, or possible, to say much here. They belong to the history of law rather than to that of political theory. In the history of law they occupy an important place. They are based, as we have seen, on the technical and systematic study of jurisprudence which was apparently pursued in the Academy by the side of the study of mathematics. A thorough examination of the laws of Sparta and Athens—especially of Athens—had gone to their making; and just as they rested on the laws of the past, so too they were destined to influence the laws of the future—the laws of the Hellenistic States, and, through them, the laws of Rome.[1] The *Laws* contains perhaps the first attempt made in Greece to frame a code which is not merely based on the laws of a single State, but embraces Greek law in general, and is not a mere tabulation, but a scientific study, with a constant reference to the first principles of social conduct. It is for Greece what Bentham's *Theory of Legislation* is for England. It is a serious contribution to jurisprudence, permeated by the legal sense, and going into legal detail. Plato is interested in legal procedure, and he lays down the rules of pleading to be followed in the courts (855 D-866 A); he discusses the law of contract, of succession, and of property in general: he regulates minutely the rights of the passing stranger to pluck the grapes of the vineyard and the apples and pears in the orchard (844 D-845 C). But though we may speak of the legal sense in Plato, he hardly shows "that artificial perfection of reason, gotten by long study of the laws," which a lawyer like Coke possessed and praised. His law is morality, and even theology, as well as law; and a trained lawyer would criticise much of the *Laws* on the ground that it is not law at all. There is no firm distinction between

[1] The *jus gentium* of Roman law, it is now held, was a body of commercial law, brought to Rome by foreign traders who settled in the suburbs for trade, and administered by Roman magistrates. Plato, in the *Laws* (952 B), speaks of the stranger, engaged in commerce, who is to be received in market-places, harbours, and public buildings, near the city but outside, by the proper magistrates, who are to see that he receives justice.

legality and morality, or between law and religion:[1] the legal code contains elements which properly belong to moral philosophy, or, again, to what may be termed moral theology. This, indeed, is a characteristic which we may find in Greek writers other than Plato. Whatever contribution the Greeks may have made to law, they never clearly demarcated law—as a separate branch of study, with its separate principles—from the general study of conduct; and just as in their courts non-legal considerations might be alleged and acknowledged, so in their writings on law we may find what we should regard as non-legal elements adduced and accepted.

Plato's View of Crime and Punishment

It is in the treatment of criminal law that Plato shows this characteristic most prominently. We must remember, indeed, to distinguish between law and preamble—between actual enactment and the explanation of that enactment in the light of first principles. That distinction is not always easy to draw: preamble runs into enactment, and enactment turns into preamble; but so far as it can be drawn, it helps us to separate between the element of moral philosophy. which naturally enters into the preamble, and that of specific law, to which we should expect the enactment to be confined. Remembering this distinction, we may turn to consider Plato's treatment of crime and punishment in the ninth book of the *Laws*. Much of that treatment moves in a sphere which is remote from that of ordinary legal ideas and practice.[2] To the lawyer and the judge crime is an external and objective act, which violates, in a greater or less degree, an external and objective scheme of ordered life, based on the recognition of concrete rights and duties. When a violation of that scheme has taken place, the judge does not inquire into the moral state of the criminal; he inquires into the actual and concrete facts of the crime. He has to decide that there is adequate proof of its commission: to what degree it violates legal order; and what is the appropriate penalty which will prevent its commission in the future. He must also, it is true, decide whether the crime was intentional or unintentional, because an intentional act is obviously and objectively different from an act which is unintentional; and he may also be bound to examine the circumstances under which the crime was committed—which again are obvious and objective—and to determine whether they extenuate or aggravate its commission. But if he considers intention, and examines circumstances and their effects, he does not examine motive as such. He does not inquire into the criminal's disposition,[3] or the motives operative within his conscience;

[1] As Cicero might say, *jura* and *officia* are not kept separate, and *jus* and *fas* are not divided.

[2] In what follows the text is concerned with the passage which runs from 857 C-864 C.

[3] Except, of course, in so far as there is a plea or a presumption of lunacy.

and he does not do so because he cannot, and because only omniscience can read the secrets of conscience—secrets which even the criminal himself, if interrogated, might not be able to explain, since men hardly know even themselves, and gloss over even to themselves their own motives and springs of action.

To Plato, however, all this circle of ideas is erroneous. Legislation, he thinks, was never yet worked out rightly (857 C). The ordinary State treats a criminal as a slave-doctor treats a sick slave—it looks at an obvious symptom, and tyrannically orders an obvious remedy, without considering the general constitution of the patient, or pausing to explain to him what is wrong, how it can be cured, and how he can co-operate in the cure (857 C-D: *cf.* 720 B-D). The true State will take a higher view of its own functions and of the criminal's rights. It will deal not so much with acts, which are symptoms, as with the general constitution of the criminal's mind; and it will seek, by the spiritual means which are appropriate to a diseased mind, to cure his malady. Laws should be loving and wise parents, rather than tyrants and masters; they should not merely threaten and depart, after placarding their decrees, but should train the citizen from day to day (859 A). This, it may be said, is to give education rather than to administer law (857 E). Plato's reply is simple. Administration of the law *is* education: punishment is reformation, and its object is so to act on the mind as to produce a conversion of character. This is a view which accords with his advocacy of preambles. They are a mode of persuasion and conversion, intended to induce the citizen freely to accept the law; and punishment also, though it may be more drastic, is still a mode of persuasion, intended to produce the same effect. But it is a view, none the less, which involves a different theory of crime from that on which ordinary law is based. Crime, on Plato's theory, is involuntary. It is not so much the intentional act of a wrong will, as the necessary result of a moral disease[1] from which the criminal is suffering, and which the State should labour to cure.

We have already seen that Plato, in the *Laws* no less than in the *Republic* (*supra*, p. 263), argues with all his strength that justice, or right-doing, is happiness. It follows that injustice, or wrong-doing, is unhappiness. No man voluntarily chooses unhappiness; and no man therefore voluntarily chooses wrong-doing, which involves unhappiness. Wrong-doing, or crime (ἀδικία), is therefore involuntary. The

[1] There is a passage in the *Timæus* (86 B *sqq.*) which deals with the diseases of the mind. "Disease of the soul consists in the absence of reason (ἄνοια); and of such absence there are two kinds—lunacy (μανία), and ignorance (ἀμαθία). The name of disease must be given to the condition of a man suffering under either of these affections." The argument of the *Timæus*, largely physiological in character, leads Plato to say (86 E), "no man is voluntarily criminal; but the criminal becomes such through some bad habit of body and improper nurture"; but this apparent attribution of crime to physiological causes must be checked and balanced from other writings of Plato.

unhappiness which it involves is not so much physical misery—though that, if not in this life, at any rate in the life to come, is its inevitable result: it is rather the more exquisite misery of spiritual degradation, which comes from the disturbance of the balance of the soul and the victory of the worse elements of passion and lust, with their worse pleasures, over the pure element of reason and its pure delights.[1] It is impossible to believe that any man will voluntarily plunge into such misery. It is equally impossible to believe that a man who has been plunged into such misery will not voluntarily welcome a cure, and be ready to accept the punishment which brings that cure.[2] In this sense the State which inflicts punishment is the agent of the criminal who is being punished: it does not merely stand for the rights of the injured person, or for a violated scheme of order, but also for the better side of the criminal himself. In the language of Rousseau he is being forced to be free—free from bondage to the worst elements of his soul; in the language of Kant, he is being treated as an end in himself, and not as a means to deter others from committing crime.

Plato would thus appear to hold a reformatory view of punishment, and to connect it with a theory of crime as a form of disease by which the criminal is visited. "No punishment inflicted according to law is inflicted for the sake of harm, but in order to produce one of two results—either to make the sufferer better, or to make him less bad than he would have been without it" (854 D-E); and the reason is "that, to him who regards crime as involuntary, the criminal must appear to commit his crimes involuntarily" (860 D). The view may remind us of that of Samuel Butler in *Erewhon*, where crime is "held to be the result of either pre-natal or post-natal misfortune," and where, "without being judicially punishable," it is put straight by "a class of men trained in soul-craft" and termed by the name of straighteners.[3] Butler, a frank determinist, would substitute the mental physician for the judge in the work of curing the involuntary

[1] *Cf. Laws*, 728 A-C. The criminal does not realise that by all his crime he is bringing his soul, *divinæ particula auræ*, into the most dishonourable and foul condition: he does not consider that he is suffering a self-inflicted retribution which is the worst of all retributions—that of growing into the likeness of the wicked, and being cut off from the society of the righteous. Whether he is punished by society or no, he is always, and essentially, miserable. Compare the argument of the *Gorgias* (*supra*, p. 136), and of the *Republic* (*supra*, p. 260).

[2] This is the argument of the *Gorgias*: "The criminal ought voluntarily to go of his own accord where he will find punishment quickest; he will visit the judge as he would a physician, for fear that the disease of crime may become chronic and make his soul permanently unsound and incurable" (480 A). In the *Laws* (859 E-860 A) Plato only argues that to suffer justice (or to be punished) is, like the doing of justice, honourable—and therefore, it is implied, a thing to be sought. A parallel may be cited from the Russian Revolution of 1917. "When the convicts in one prison were told that they were free, they answered: 'We have no right to be free. We have committed crimes, and must expiate them.' Straightway they elected warders from among their number, swore to obey them, and to hang any man who should attempt to escape" (*Times*, April 21, 1917). This illustrates Kant's principle that, if a society dissolved, it would be its last duty to punish every criminal before its dissolution.

[3] *Erewhon*, c. x.

"misfortune" of crime. Plato's attitude to crime may seem logically to involve a similar consequence. If crime is involuntary, why legislate against it as if it were the reverse; and why retain any judicature? Yet Plato legislates, and legislates in abundance; he retains a judicature, and, what is more, he retains, as we shall see, a distinction between involuntary and voluntary offences.

The truth is that Plato is not by any means a determinist after the fashion of Butler. He does not regard crime as the result of inherited bias, or as the consequence of an evil social environment. The old idea of an hereditary taint he specifically repudiates: children, he holds, may escape their father's ways (855 A). The influence of society on its members he admits, and indeed emphasises throughout the *Republic* and the *Laws*: a bad State makes bad citizens (832 B-C). But crime remains for him crime—a thing to be abhorred; a thing not only involving social disgrace (*αἰσχρόν*), but also and in itself degrading (*κακόν*). If he holds it to be involuntary, that does not mean that it is a misfortune which has befallen the criminal *ab extra*: it means that it is a corruption of the soul which no thinking man can ever freely choose to incur. Plato, in a word, believes at one and the same moment in the real wickedness of crime and the real goodness of man's mind; and that is why he believes that free mind can never voluntarily issue into crime. When wickedness enters, it is because the mind is enslaved, and involuntarily accepts the unwelcome guest. Anger and lust have overpowered it, and prepared a habitation for that which it abhors (863). The bad State may have made such a conquest easy: it is all the more the duty of the good State to conquer the conquerors, and to restore the free sovereignty of mind. Plato insists less on the evil effects of an evil State than on the good work which the good State can perform in helping its citizens to conquer passion and pleasure. It can train them and habituate them in youth by all the agencies of education: it can guide and correct them all their days by its laws and courts and judges. It can pit the pains by which it visits crime against the violent pleasures which incite men to its commission: it can train the criminal by such diet and regimen until he is cured, and mind is seated once more on her throne. And if all else fails, and the State cannot give back to the criminal health of mind, it can give him, as the last resource, the gift of death. "It is better for such men not to live; and moreover by their death they will do a double service to the State, furnishing others with an example to warn them from crime, and ridding the State of evil-doers" (862 E: 864 E).

Plato, then, admits the responsibility of society for the corruption which is fostered by its own corruption: he admits, and he emphasises, the responsibility of society for the correction and cure of all corruption; but he never denies the responsibility of the

individual for his acts. Crime is the result of the criminal's own passions; and even if his reason is an involuntary agent, something in him must be held responsible (Plato hardly explains what that something is, and this is a lacuna in his exposition), and that something must be corrected, or if it cannot be corrected, it must be annihilated. The theory of the involuntary nature of crime is thus compatible with laws, courts, judges, punishments, and even with the *ultima ratio* of capital punishment. Not only so, but it proves, in the issue, compatible with a distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions. In order to achieve this distinction, Plato first of all distinguishes (861 E-862 B) between crime, or ἀδικία, and damage, or βλαβή. Crime depends on motive and disposition: it is an internal corruption of the soul, which is always involuntary. Damage is an objective act, which results in the material diminution of the status or property of the person damaged; and it may be intentional or unintentional.[1] Crime is a matter for cure and punishment: damage is a matter for compensation, and such compensation is twofold, part going to make restitution, and part to the chastisement of the offence (933 E).[2] Damage does not necessarily involve crime: it is separate from crime, may exist without crime, and must be treated apart from crime. It is wrong to believe, as men generally believe, that all damages are crimes, and that therefore, damages being divisible into intentional and unintentional, crimes may be divided into voluntary and involuntary (861 E).[3]

[1] Plato's distinction between ἀδικία and βλαβή is in some respects like the distinction made in English law between crime and tort—between an act punishable by law as being forbidden by statute or injurious to the public welfare, and an act (not involving breach of contract) for which an action will lie against the agent on the ground that it constitutes a civil wrong or injury. Compare Austin's definition: "An offence which is pursued at the discretion of the injured party or his representative is a civil injury. An offence which is pursued by the Sovereign or the subordinates of the Sovereign is a crime." But (1) crime is not made crime to Plato by statute, but by the ἦθος καὶ τρόπος of the criminal; and (2) Plato's distinction between ἀδικία and βλαβή does not rest on the difference between the modes of legal action to which they give rise, but on the difference between the subjective (criminal disposition) and the objective (material injury).

[2] Part, in the language of old German law, is *bot*, and goes to the injured man: part is *wite*, and goes to the community to atone for the breach of its peace.

[3] Plato's argument is not very clear to me. As far as I follow it, the argument is (1) that unintentional damage is not crime, since crime depends on a criminal ἦθος καὶ τρόπος (862 B), which is not present in such damage: (2) that intentional damage may be crime, and will always be crime when a criminal disposition is present. But crime itself is always involuntary; and it therefore follows that intentional damage in which a criminal disposition is present means involuntary crime. Baldly stated, this is a contradiction, or at any rate a paradox.

The argument may perhaps be put more clearly if we start at the opposite end, from the conception of crime rather than from the conception of damage. Crime is always involuntary. It is therefore a mistake to speak of all offences as if they were crimes and to distinguish some as voluntary and others as involuntary. The right procedure is (1) to distinguish between crime, which is always involuntary, and damage, which may be intentional or unintentional: and (2) to classify an act such as unintentional homicide under the head of damage, and not under the head of crime. Intentional homicide, and that only, will then come under the head of crime; but even here, though the homicidal act may be intentional, the crime itself is involuntary.

On this argument we should expect two consequences to follow—first, that some distinction between intentional and unintentional damage would appear in the amount of compensation exacted [1]; and secondly that crime, whether or no it issues in damage, would always be visited with the punishment appropriate to crime. Neither of these consequences, however, is drawn by Plato.[2] He is not concerned to develop his principles, but simply to state the principles themselves. The essence of these principles is that there is a distinction between the law that relates to external action, or damage, and the law that relates to inward disposition, or crime; and that the distinction of voluntary and involuntary can only be drawn within the former sphere. Such principles could hardly work in practice; nor are they really applied in practice by Plato himself. The State cannot take cognisance of inward disposition, because such disposition is not a cognisable and measurable fact. The State deals with men in the mass, and with actions in the mass; and action on such a scale must be quantitative and not qualitative, dealing with measurable and external things, and not with the fine shades of motive and disposition. Immorality must be visited by the conscience: only illegality can be visited by the State. A State of five thousand citizens, in which the authorities knew every citizen, might indeed essay what the great State of our days could never attempt; nor can we do justice to Plato's view unless we remember that it is adjusted to 'the small society'. But even such a State, if it attempted the task suggested by Plato, would find itself in a dilemma. It might either become impossibly inquisitorial and rigorous; or going on the motto *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*, it might sacrifice the maintenance of law and order on the altar of a too charitable comprehension of the springs of all action and the characters of all agents.

Plato perhaps hoped, as the idealist cannot but hope, that men might rise above the strict letter of the law with its external appreciations and its mechanical applications—applications sometimes excessively lenient and sometimes excessively rigorous—to a spirit of understanding that never failed: he perhaps trusted that rulers such as he sought to institute might do what ordinary governments failed, or never attempted, to achieve, and that "legislating for those best able to judge," he might legislate in new and higher ways (876 D).

[1] On the ground that the part of the compensation which goes to "the chastisement of the offence" should be greater for intentional than for unintentional damage.

[2] Plato suggests, indeed, that if we distinguish acts done with violence and openly from acts done secretly and with deceit, the laws concerning the latter should possess a character of severity (864 C); but this is a new distinction, which does not coincide with that between intentional and unintentional damage. As far as the second consequence mentioned in the text is concerned, he admits that, in theory, the intent to murder is crime, and that it ought to be punished as the crime of murder, even if it does not achieve its object (877 A). Actually, however, he takes into consideration the deed as it occurred, and remits the penalty of death in favour of a milder penalty.

But if he did, it was only in passing; and he does not seek to carry his principles into effect, when he begins to legislate on matters of criminal law. In spite of his thesis that all crime is involuntary, and that the distinction of voluntary and involuntary can only be applied in the sphere of damages, he suggests a law of homicide which is based on the ordinary conception of crime and the ordinary distinction between intentional and unintentional actions (865 A-874 C). There is involuntary homicide, which demands ritual purification: there is homicide committed under the influence of passion, which, if it is unpremeditated, is akin to involuntary homicide, and may be lightly punished, but, if it is premeditated, is akin to voluntary homicide, and must be punished more heavily; finally, there is voluntary homicide with criminal purpose, which is to be punished with death.[1] Plato, in effect, after registering a protest against the principles on which ordinary law is based, is content to follow the principles of ordinary law. It may seem therefore as if the whole discussion on the nature of crime and the distinction of the voluntary and the involuntary (857 C-864 C) were only a digression, and a digression inconsistent with the main body of the *Laws*. That, indeed, is very largely the case. Plato is anxious, as it were, to save the honour of philosophy while at the same time following the ordinary rules of jurisprudence. In his philosophy there is no room for the conception of voluntary crime which appears in jurisprudence; and he therefore registers a philosophic protest against the conception of voluntary crime. The protest once made, he turns back to jurisprudence, and, adopting its conceptions, seeks to give them a new and more thorough system. The reader, warned that on first principles the legal scheme cannot stand, will accept that scheme contingently and conditionally. It is "the law," indeed, but it is not also "the prophets": it is the scheme of life of the ordinary State, but it would not be the scheme of life in an ideal society.[2]

[1] The very phrase, associating, as it does, voluntary action with crime (ἑκούσια καὶ κατ' ἀδικίαν πᾶσαν, 869 E), is a contradiction of the previous argument. Plato, it will be noticed, leaves no room for cure (otherwise than by the punishment of death) of the voluntary homicide who has committed murder with malice aforethought: he accepts the ordinary Greek law of capital punishment. His treatment of homicide in general is not unlike that in English law. English law distinguishes (1) justifiable or excusable homicide (on the distinction see *The Laws of England*, IX. 586-7): (2) culpable homicide. The latter falls into two main divisions: (1) manslaughter, or unlawful homicide without malice aforethought, when one person causes the death of another, either intentionally in the heat of passion under certain kinds of provocation, or unintentionally, whether by culpable negligence or while committing an unlawful act not likely to cause damage to others; (2) wilful murder, which is unlawful homicide with malice aforethought.

[2] *Cf.* Ritter's commentary on the *Laws*, pp. 280-1. Plato, as he does so often in the *Laws*, is working on two levels—the ideal and the practicable—without adjusting or reconciling the two. This appears clearly in 858 A: "We are under no necessity to legislate, but engaged as we are in a general consideration of all forms of government, we can study alike the best possible and the necessary minimum, and the means of carrying both into effect". But the best possible and the necessary minimum are not always clearly divorced: and in Plato's treatment of law, just as in his treatment of the constitution and government of the State, the two run into one another.

In the issue, therefore, Plato returns to the conception of crime on which the judge in any court of law proceeds. He is willing to treat crime as voluntary wrong-doing: he is willing that inquiry should be made into intention, and into attendant circumstances, without pressing for consideration of the motives and disposition of the wrong-doer. The disappearance of the conception of crime as involuntary may seem to involve, as a natural corollary, the disappearance of the view of punishment which is connected with that conception. Plato, however, retains his belief in the reformatory nature of punishment; and even when he treats crime as voluntary wrong-doing, he still continues to regard punishment as a process of healing the wrong-doer. Crime remains, in his view, not only a violation of social order, which society is bound to prevent, but also, and even more, a moral enormity in the criminal, which society is bound either to cure or to kill. He is convinced that punishment is not retributive: he will allow that it is preventive: he insists that it is reformatory. In a passage in the ninth book he repeats, almost in identical words, the view he had put forward long ago in the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias*. Punishment is not retribution for the past, for what has been done can never be undone: it is imposed for the sake of the future, and to secure that both the person punished, and those who see him punished, may either learn to detest crime utterly, or at any rate to abate much of their old behaviour (934 A-B).[1] Here reformation of the criminal himself, and the prevention of crime in others, are set side by side as joint objects of punishment. But of these objects reformation is prior, and prevention is secondary and consequential. The conception of crime as disease, and the use of metaphors drawn from the art of medicine, run through the *Laws*; and if Plato does not, like Samuel Butler, invent practitioners for spiritual "straightening" (or, as it is nowadays called, orthopædy), he brings punishment primarily under the rubric of therapeutics. We must beware, indeed, of thinking that his medical metaphors have any affinity with the language of modern criminologists who treat crime as a species of physical disease. The disease of which Plato speaks is always a disease of the spirit, and is never conceived to issue from defects in the constitution of body or nervous system.[2] Yet objection may be taken to the use of medical metaphors in the sphere of crime, even when they are used in the sense in which they are used by Plato. Crime is not a disease: it is the assertion of an anti-social will by a

[1] "Reasonable punishment is not retribution for the past (what has been done cannot be undone): its reference is to the future, and its purpose is to turn from future wrong-doing both the criminal himself and those who have seen his punishment" (*Prot.*, 324 A-B). "Every one undergoing punishment, when such punishment is properly inflicted, must either become a better man, and profit by it, or become an example to others, so that others, seeing his sufferings, may be afraid and amend their ways" (*Gorg.*, 525 B).

[2] See, however, what was said above, p. 355 n. 1.

free and responsible agent,[1] who must be treated by society as intending his action and its results, and on whose act society must react if it is to preserve itself and all the scheme of life on which it is based. The moral philosopher may treat crime as a moral disease: society, as an organised body of men living under a set of rules, must treat crime as a deliberate and responsible defiance of those rules. It must defend itself and its scheme of life; and the primary purpose of such defence, or in other words of punishment, must be to prevent violation of that scheme. Prevention is better than cure; but prevention may also be cure, and preventive punishment may also, and as it were incidentally, be a reformation of the person punished. To seek to deter others from the violation of social rights is also to deter the criminal himself; and in this way, and to this extent, the criminal is reformed through punishment. Such reformation, however, is "an incident of the preventive function" of punishment.[2] Plato reverses this order. He regards prevention as a concomitant, and even, we may say, as an incident, of the primary and essential function of cure and reformation.

Yet the punishments which Plato desires to see inflicted by no means err on the side of leniency. It was said above that the State which acted on Plato's principles would either be impossibly inquisitorial and rigorous, or impracticably charitable to the sinner. It was said, too, that Plato had a firm belief in the real wickedness of crime. We might therefore expect, and we find, that it is the first alternative which is followed in the *Laws*. Something has already been said of the espionage which Plato admits; and one of the features of the later books of the *Laws* is the rigour of the sentences imposed on a variety of offences. The list of capital offences seems constantly to receive fresh accessions. In the ninth book it includes sacrilege, faction, and treason: in the tenth book it embraces forms of religious unbelief: in the eleventh book it is extended to advocates who make the better course appear the worse: in the twelfth book it is made to include offence after offence—the theft of public property;[3] misconduct of magistrates; the receiving of exiles and the taking of bribes; and contempt of the decisions of courts of law. The 'remedy of death' is administered in profusion; and if some

[1] If the agent is not free, there is no crime, but only lunacy. The danger of any conception of crime as a form of disease is that it tends to abrogate the distinction between crime and lunacy. The criminal has a right to be treated as sane, and society has a duty to treat him as sane, unless he is certified to be suffering from the physical disease of lunacy. Plato, of course, does not identify crime with lunacy; but even when he treats it as voluntary, he is apt to use language which makes it something like a form of possession.

[2] T. H. Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, § 204 (*cf.* § 193): "The State in its capacity as sustainer of rights (and it is in this capacity that it punishes) has nothing to do with the amount of moral depravity in the criminal, and the primary reference in punishment is—not to the effect of the punishment on the person punished, but to its effects on others".

[3] *Cf. Laws*, 941. In an earlier passage (857 A-B) it was laid down by Plato that theft even of public property only involved a double compensation.

of the offences thus visited were also made capital under the law of Athens,[1] there are several which Plato stands alone in including in his rigorous catalogue.

Religion and Religious Persecution

Among the offences punishable by death Plato includes, as we have just seen, the offence of religious unbelief. The ecclesiastical law[2] contained in the *Laws* is one of the most striking elements in all the dialogue, and it marks the greatest departure from the tone and temper of the earlier dialogues. The last work of Plato's life has something of the mystical lore of life's sunset. As he drew towards the shades, he felt more and more the littleness of human things, the greatness of God, and the supreme need of a reverent faith.

> We the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
> We men, who in our morn of youth defied
> The elements,

are after all but "playthings of the gods; and this, truly considered, is the best of us" (804 C: 644 E). Enough, then,

> If, as towards the silent land we go,
> Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendant dower,
> We feel that we are greater than we know.

It is He who should be for us the measure of all things, and not (as Protagoras said) we ourselves (716 C); it is in Him we should put our trust, and not in our own subtle reasonings. In this evening spirit Plato turns to the materialist who explains the world in terms of matter, and the immanent powers of matter, and the necessary laws of motion according to which matter moves (889 B-890 C). On such a view the world began with elements each possessed of an immanent power; and from the accidents of their struggles and combinations — combinations in which one element asserted itself and others admitted its mastery—Nature or Chance produced sun and moon, plants and animals, and all existence as we know it. No God, no mind, no art made the world: there are no gods; mind is an epiphenomenon; art is a later invention. Art sprang up afterwards, and out of Nature or Chance: art is mortal, and of mortal birth: it is a human and temporary thing: it is only an imitation of Nature and her products and processes. Some of these imitations are merely in play, like music and painting; some have a serious purpose, like husbandry, which imitates Nature's process of reproduction and co-operates with Nature in the process. Of the latter kind

[1] *Cf.* Jowett, introduction to the *Laws*, ccxxvii-ccxxix.

[2] Of the sketch of civil law contained in the *Laws* I have not attempted to give any account here. Plato covers the whole range of civil law partly in the early books, in which he regulates marriage and property on the lines already described; partly in the eleventh book, where he deals with commercial law (915-920: *cf. supra*, p. 325), with the law of contract (920-921), with the law of succession (922 A-928 C), and with family law in general (928 D-932 D). On the judicial institutions of the *Laws*, see p. 337.

is political art: it imitates and co-operates with Nature, but it does so in a less degree than husbandry. It imitates very imperfectly: Nature hardly co-operates at all in its work: the laws it makes are utterly artificial, and based on false assumptions. The one law of Nature is that in the struggle for mastery the strongest element is master. In the human world, as in the physical, each unit should assert its immanent power. The highest right is might: to live according to nature is to have dominion over others, and not to be legally subject to others. These are the true assumptions; law based on these assumptions is the only true law: political art which imitates *fera Natura* is the only true art of politics. As it is, laws differ from State to State, according to the different agreements men make with one another when they legislate. Instead of the one uniform law of Nature, there is a chaos of different laws; instead of a harmony between Nature and the art which imitates nature, there is a gulf between art and nature, and men make dishonourable by law what is not dishonourable by Nature.[1]

Thus, according to Plato, does a materialistic conception of the world, as without mind and without God, result in a correspondingly materialistic conception of politics. It is such bad metaphysics which makes true metaphysics necessary: "if such arguments had not been scattered broad-cast, there would have been no need of arguments to defend the existence of the gods" (891 B). As it is, their existence must be defended, and Plato attempts the defence. He tells us, as the true rationalist will always tell mankind, that mind is first and matter last. The false rationalist simply inverts the order of the world, when he begins with mindless matter, and then introduces mind, under the name of art, as the mere product of matter, and yet its active imitator, and even its perverter. Mind is first, in the sense of the eternal Mind: it is the controller (or, as Plato says, the mover), and not the product of matter; and as the eternal Mind of God moves the universe—

Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet—

so mind moves each of its parts, and "all things are full of gods". But if this is so, the antithesis between Nature, which is fashioned by mind, and art, which mind also fashions, must disappear. "Law, and all art, exist by Nature, or no less than Nature, because they are products of mind" (890 D). Nature is not the laws of mindless being, or art man's imitation or perversion of that being and its laws: Nature is being, controlled and moved by mind, and art, if it is making, is making which is also controlled and moved by mind.

Nature is made better by no mean
But Nature makes that mean; so o'er that art,
Which, you say, adds to Nature, is an art
That Nature makes. . . . This is an art
Which does mend Nature—change it rather; but
The art itself is Nature.

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 66.

Materialism, however, must not only be corrected by philosophical argument: subversive as it is of the proper conceptions of law and politics, it must also be corrected by the force of the State. The State must lay down the lines of a true belief about ultimate things, or, in other words, a State-religion, and it must punish (or persecute) those who refuse to accept its creed. The religious creed laid down in the *Laws* is the creed of a natural religion, whose fundamental tenet—the existence of a Divine Mind which controls the universe—is proved by a study of the heavens. Plato preaches this creed with the fervour, and sometimes in the very language, of the Hebrew prophets; and the three main articles of his creed are the articles of the belief of Isaiah and Ezekiel. The first article is the existence of God (893 A-899 D). Motion is produced by mind, and the perfect motions of the heavens can only be produced by a perfect mind. Plato's language is sometimes monotheistic, and sometimes polytheistic: sometimes he speaks of God, and sometimes of the gods; but his fundamental belief is in a presiding and controlling mind of the universe, even though he is willing to hold that sun and moon and stars, years and months and seasons, have each their moving mind and each their proper deity. The second article is the universal providence of God (899 D-905 C). He neither slumbers nor sleeps; He governs all things, great and small. The world is a single scheme, contrived by its mover and ruler so that all works together unto good; each of us has his place, which the King himself has assigned, and each has his part to play in the scheme of the whole: He watches over all, and rewards each player according to his part. Nothing escapes His watchfulness: no man can escape His justice: to serve His will in our appointed place is to find happiness, and to desert our place in rebellion against His will is to find misery at the latter end.[1] The last article of Plato's creed is the unswerving justice of God, and his unfailing observance of the law by which He acts (905 C-907 A).[2] He will never violate, by one jot or tittle, the scheme on which the world moves. No supplications can move Him from the way of justice: no sacrifices and oblations will save the sinner from his reward.

A true State, Plato believes, can only exist on the foundation of such religious belief and through the acceptance of such articles of religion. Apart from such a belief, and if agnostic principles are allowed free play, the State becomes a chaos; naturalistic ethics triumph, and a state of nature ensues in which each man claims rights co-extensive with his natural powers. The argument of the *Laws* on this point has its affinities with that of Burke in the

[1] The noblest passage in this argument (903 B-905 C), which is the highest expression of the religious thought of Greece, and singularly akin to the religious thought of Judea, has already been partly quoted, *supra*, p. 264.

[2] This view, that God always observes law, affected St. Augustine, and through St. Augustine those thinkers, such as Wycliffe, who followed the Augustinian tradition.

Reflections on the French Revolution. Plato might have subscribed to Burke when he spoke of the religious sense as "having consecrated the commonwealth, and all that officiate in it". . . . "This consecration is made, that all who administer in the government of men, in which they stand in the person of God Himself, should have high and worthy notions of their function and destination. This consecration is necessary also to operate with a wholesome awe upon free citizens." Burke was arguing against the French Revolution, where, in his view, political chaos went hand in hand with the destruction of the Church and the decay of religious belief. Plato was arguing against Athenian democracy, where, he held (p. 311), egoism and license were the corollary in political life of materialism and unbelief in the realm of opinion. Burke advocated the State establishment of a church : Plato, to whom a church was an unknown thing, advocated State establishment of a creed. This is to make disbelief a violation of law ; and where Burke is only committed to the imposition of disabilities on dissenters from the established Church, Plato is thus committed to religious persecution.

The persecution which he advocates takes three main directions. Honest disbelievers, who are such for want of understanding, but are otherwise good men and citizens, are to be imprisoned for five years in the House of Reformation (σωφρονιστήριον) which stands near the place of meeting of the nocturnal council. Here they are to be visited by the members of the council, who are to "hold converse with them for their correction and the salvation of their souls" (909 A). At the end of five years they are released ; and if they are reformed, they dwell in peace, but if they are not, and if they are again convicted of unbelief, they are put to death.[1] Dishonest disbelievers, who not only disbelieve in the religion of the State, but practise vain charms and incantations of their own for the sake of profit, to the ruin of individuals and families and cities, are to be imprisoned for life, in solitary confinement, in a dungeon situated in some desolate and savage tract near the centre of the country ; and when they are dead, their bodies are to be cast outside the frontiers. Finally, Plato lays down a law against "private religions". He would prohibit not only unbelief, but also private belief : he would not only command conformity to the order of public worship, but also forbid conventicles

[1] A parallel may be cited from the last chapter of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, entitled *de la religion civile*. Rousseau does not, like Plato, seek to establish a religious creed, but he would assign to the community the power of fixing the articles of a purely civil profession of faith. These articles are to contain not dogmas of religion, but sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible for men to be good citizens. Those who disbelieve are to be punished, not on the ground that they are impious, but on the ground that they are unsociable. If any man, after having publicly recognised these articles, conducts himself as if he disbelieved in them, he is to be punished with death ; he has committed the greatest of crimes—he has lied in the face of the laws.

in which any sort of private worship is practised. The establishment of places of worship, and the institution of cults, are a difficult and delicate matter which demands discretion, and should not be rashly undertaken, in some superstitious mood, by any chance citizen. There is an additional reason for prohibiting private chapels and services. They may be instituted not only by the credulous, who, while ready to confess the creed of the State, wish to add a private creed, but also by disbelievers of the baser sort, who seek to cover their disbelief by a cloak of private devotion. Both reasons demand their suppression; the credulous must be compelled, by punishment if necessary, to resort only to public places of worship: the disbeliever who has professed a devotion which he does not feel must be punished with death.[1]

In some respects Plato's advocacy of religious persecution may remind us of the Roman Church of the Middle Ages. There is, however, an essential difference. The persecution which Plato advocates is secular: it is caused by disbelief in a State religion: it is practised for *raison d'état*. The persecution of the mediæval Church was clerical: it was enforced by the courts of the Church: it was intended to maintain the purity of that general society of all Christian men which transcended States and their boundaries. A truer analogy may perhaps be found in the religious persecution of Elizabeth. Her motto, like that of Plato, was *salus populi*. If Plato believed that a State which was not held together by a common religious belief must necessarily fall into a state of nature and a *bellum omnium contra omnes*, Elizabeth believed that an England not united by a uniform religious ritual must necessarily be torn by a civil war of sects. If he thought that a State in which unbelief was tolerated could never be permitted by Heaven to prosper (910 B), she too thought—or at any rate spoke—in much the same way. Such considerations may help to explain the advocacy by Plato of religious intolerance; but do they excuse it? It has been urged, by way of excuse, that the rulers of Plato's State, who had found their way to a true belief through science and the study of the starry heavens, would not readily repress in others the liberty of thought they had practised themselves.[2] Yet is not Plato inconsistent with himself, and his own best critic, when he writes, in defence of the study of astronomy, "It is said that we ought not to inquire into the supreme God and the universe, or to cumber ourselves with much searching after first causes, because these things are contrary to faith; but the truth is entirely the other way . . . and if a man thinks any sort of study

[1] Plato seems here to be departing from general Greek ideas. Impiety, as we have seen (p. 8), was to the Greek the offence of omitting "to worship the gods whom the State worshipped". Greek States, therefore, generally insisted on formal worship of the civic deities (the community might suffer if the worship of its gods was not generally observed); but they left individuals free, as a rule, to add rites of their own, and to worship other gods in addition to those of the State.

[2] Ritter's *Commentary*, pp. 327-30.

noble and true, useful to society and pleasing to God, he can do no other than speak" (821 A-B)? In truth, it is no good defence of Plato to urge that he could afford to persecute, because he could trust the wisdom of the persecutor; nor do we justify the teaching of the *Laws* by pleading that its author would never have entrusted the rulers of ordinary States with the powers he was willing to confer on the rulers of his ideal community. The fundamental question remains—can any human being be entrusted with coercive power over others in the realm of religious belief? Even if that question be answered in the affirmative, a further question arises; can a creed based on human reason, as Plato's creed was, ever claim the infallibility, and the right to be vindicated by persecution, which the mediæval Church held herself justified in claiming because she believed her creed, and her own interpretation of that creed, to be divinely inspired?

CHAPTER XVII

THE THEORY OF EDUCATION IN THE *LAWS*

Prolegomena to the Theory of Education

THE enforcement of law, in the last resort, demands punishment, which acts on the mind, in Plato's view, by the remedy of pain, and seeks by that remedy to counteract and evacuate those violent pleasures which are the incentives to crime. Punishment, as we have seen, is thus in a sense education; but it is the education of an unhealthy mind. It only operates through occasional shocks: it only operates on the worse elements of the mind: it only operates negatively, through the application of irritants. Education proper is constant: it is a training of the normal mind, and of every element in that mind: it operates positively, in the form of a guiding direction alike of pleasures and pains. There is indeed such a thing as a partial education: there is the technical education by which the young are trained to excellence in the special arts and crafts they will afterwards follow (643 B-C); but the only education which deserves the name is the general education of the young in the general art of citizenship. Here the object is civic excellence: the way is the way of instilling desire and love for a perfect citizenship: the product is the citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled in the way of justice (643 E). The ideal of such civic excellence is set forth in the laws. They are the rules by which magistrates govern and subjects render obedience. It is the aim of education, therefore, to initiate the young in the spirit of the laws (659 E); and it is its method so to train their affections, and so to form their habits, that they desire, through force of ingrained habit, what the law commands, and reject, with instinctive dislike, what the law forbids (653 B-C). Such habituation may be achieved directly or indirectly. It may be achieved directly, if the young are taught to respect and admire the actual law, and to acquire a perfect knowledge of all its rules (811 B): it may be achieved indirectly (and this is the only thorough way, and the only true education), if they are imbued with the inner spirit and tone of the law, and taught to acquire a habit of mind which will always issue in action according to the law.

The law is fixed; and therefore the substance and curriculum of

education must be equally fixed. Egypt is Plato's ideal.[1] Long ago, literally ten thousand years ago, the Egyptians recognised that the types of music and education, which the young should draw into their habits and their very blood, must be fixed by a proper standard; and through all the ages the types once fixed have been rigorously observed (653 D-E). Plato would adopt the rule of Egypt, and extend it even to the games of childhood. When games, and the rules of games, are fixed; when children play, in the words of one of their immemorial rhymes, "as they have done before," the State itself, and the rules it should follow in earnest, will undergo no change (797 A-B). It is the sovereign sanction of all laws that no man should remember, or even have heard, that they were ever otherwise than they are now; and if ever games are changed, this quiet temper of stability will change with them, and a new generation, practised in new games, will seek when it reaches maturity to change the laws as before it changed the games (798 B-C). Dance and song must accordingly be consecrated, as they are in Egypt: those who suggest any change are to be excluded from participation, and, if they persist, to be indicted for irreligion (799 A-B). This is a temper which is hardly favourable to artistic freedom; and in the *Laws*, as in the *Republic*, Plato establishes a thorough censorship of art. Rules are created, and types are prescribed, for literary composition: no poet is to compose any verses which offend the views of law and justice, of beauty and goodness, professed by the State, or to publish any composition until it has been seen and approved by the proper judges and the guardians of the law (801 C-D).[2] Song and dance are regulated in the same way; a body of judges, over the age of fifty, are to select the best models of the past; they may take the advice of poets and musicians, but their paramount duty is to interpret and enforce the wishes of the legislator (802 B-C). The drama survives; but it survives in subjection. "Serious things cannot be understood apart from things ridiculous;" and comedy, therefore, may be permitted—provided that its performance is left to slaves and strangers hired for the purpose (816 D-E), and provided, too, that a citizen is never made the butt of its satire (935 E).[3] Tragedy is treated even

[1] References to Egypt, especially in Plato's later works, are constant; and they suggest that the tradition of his travels in Egypt is probably true. He admires Egyptian study of mathematics—the Greeks in comparison are swinish creatures: he admires Egyptian antiquity—"ἕλληνες ἀεὶ παῖδές ἐστε, γέρων δὲ ἕλλην οὐκ ἔστιν" (*Timæus*, 22 B). At the same time he confesses that "there are poor things in Egypt" (*Laws*, 654 B).

[2] In 829 C-D Plato suggests a further restriction. He suggests that odes on famous men (such, for instance, as Tennyson's Ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington) should only be composed (1) by men over the age of fifty, and (2) by those who have themselves done good and noble actions. Yet an ode by—let us say—Palmerston on the death of the Great Duke would not only have been worse poetry, but also less of a moral force, than Tennyson's Ode. Plato forgets, and being a poet himself can afford to forget, the poet's gift of sympathetic imagination.

[3] The comic poet, or the satirist, who ridicules a citizen, incurs the penalty of exile. This would have excluded Aristophanes from Athens. (Plato allows, however, a fine of three minæ as an alternative to exile. This might have reduced Aristophanes to beggary.)

more drastically. No tragedy can be produced until it has been submitted to the magistrates, and unless, in their view, its teaching is the same as that of the laws, or even better than theirs (817 D). In all these regulations Plato shows the tendency, which literary thinkers on politics have often shown since, to join "the fastidious or pedantocratic school of government".[1] The curious feature of his pedantocracy is that it is most fastidious in that department, to which we naturally think of Plato himself as belonging—the department of literature. Plato would have rejected such a description of himself. He is a legislator rather than a man of letters; and as, in the tenth book of the *Republic*, he exalts the legislator above Homer, so, in the *Laws*, he enthrones the legislator and magistrate above the musician and poet. His zest for the righteousness of the law overpowers his own art, of which he was unconscious. A 'converted poet,' he was ruthless to the class from which he came.

It would seem, from what has been said, that Plato condemns the youth of his State,—so far, at any rate, as their studies lay in 'music' —to a desiccated curriculum. Nor is it unfair to accuse him, in his eagerness for stability and his anxiety to remove from the way of youth whatever might possibly offend or corrupt, of draining too dry those springs of initiative, and curtailing too narrowly that freedom of choice, which an educational system should guide but never wither. Perhaps it matters less in what we are educated, than what sort of mental energy we develop in the process; and the enthusiasm of youth for new modes, new authors, and new music is after all the generous enthusiasm of a growing mind. We who are middle-aged or old know that "among old poems there are many that are old and good" (802 A); but each must find out the good for himself, and every young man will wish to make his own peculiar discovery. Life must be stable, but it must also grow; and it can only grow by breaking the old founts and cutting new types. Art may be a mode of social service, but it will cease to be art if it is scheduled too exactly to run in the obvious channels of social economy. Dance and song and music—poetry, drama, art—are no channeled waters; they arise, like Arethusa, from Acroceraunian mountains, and they make their own channels as they flow. There is, it is true, a luxurious, and exotic art of the coterie, an art which may be decadent and corrupting; but if it is evil it will be killed by the general taste—in which Plato disbelieved, and for which he sought to substitute State regulation—and it may be left to die.

The State Control of Education

Plato made his choice, and his choice fell on State regulation. With many of his regulations we of this generation instinctively

[1] Plato, with the Platonic quality of the man of letters, seeks to import into social and artistic life the beauty of order and the charm of regulation. Yet men of letters do not always regulate themselves, and they seldom love to be regulated by others.

disagree:[1] yet his general theory of education remains not only far in advance of the practice of his own times, but also, in some respects, ahead of our own. He assigns a higher place to education, and a greater position to its minister, than most modern States have succeeded in doing. The minister of education in his State is to be a man of fifty years of age, married, and a father of children, who is to be chosen from among the guardians of the law by an electoral body composed of all the magistrates. His office, as we have seen, is to be accounted the greatest of all offices; and the minister of education is to be the 'prime minister' of the State. This has a double reason. In the first place, he has charge of the children; and "the first shoot of everything in nature, if it makes a good start on the path towards its natural excellence, has most to do with the attainment of a proper consummation" (765 E). In the second place, he has charge of education; and "while man, if he enjoys a right education and a happy endowment, becomes most divine and civilised of all living things, he is the most savage of all the products of the earth if he is inadequately or improperly trained" (766 A).

The functions of the minister of education are to direct administration and education in gymnasia and schools, to regulate attendance, and to supervise buildings (764 D). Directly under him come the judges, or, as we should say, examiners and inspectors (ἀθλοθέται), who control competitive contests and award prizes, both in gymnastics and in music. The musical examiners, two in number, are to be elected in the general assembly by those interested in music, who are compelled to attend under the penalty of a fine; and they must possess some special knowledge of music. The three examiners in gymnastics, which all men are supposed to be able to judge, are chosen by a meeting of the general assembly, which members of the three first classes are compelled to attend, from the members of the second and third classes (765 A-C). While he thus takes pains to secure a proper minister of education and proper examiners and inspectors, Plato, in a way characteristically Greek, dismisses the teachers themselves in a single phrase. They are to be resident aliens; and they are to be paid (804 C-D). The citizen cannot be expected to do paid work, which would be degrading; nor can he, in any case, be expected to do such work as elementary teaching, which general Greek opinion placed in a still lower category, if that be pos-

[1] One generation easily criticises another; and Plato's generation is twenty-three centuries removed from our own. By the end of this century our grand-children may be living in a socialistic republic, and they may think very differently from us about Plato, and about all the past. In any case we must always remember that Plato wrote for his generation, and not for ours. The great State of to-day, where everything is in the mass, tends of its own weight to routine and uniformity. The small States of the Greek world might be readily upset by one eccentric citizen or one small innovation—the fifth book of Aristotle's *Politics* is full of instances—and besides, they were the home of mercurial Greeks, "loving always some new thing".

sible, than general English opinion to-day. The status of the schoolmaster was apparently lower at Athens than that of the craftsman ;[1] but Plato's attitude, if it is easily explained by contemporary facts, is not altogether worthy of Plato. It is one of the defects in Greek educational theory that it shows no appreciation of the function and importance of the teacher; it is one of the main differences in modern educational theory that it allows for the force of personal 'suggestion' in determining the growth of character, emphasises the influence which the personality of the teacher can exercise, and recognises the need for raising his status and improving his training.[2]

If his treatment of the teacher shows Plato limited by the prejudices of his age, he rises above contemporary prejudices in other ways. Athenian parents sent their children to different teachers for different subjects: Plato advocates a single school, in which teachers are provided for all subjects of instruction (804 D). He has little to say about the proposal ; and yet it is one of profound importance. The single school, in which all subjects were taught together by a single staff, would vitalise teaching, correlate and systematise curricula, and bring its members under the influence of a common tone and tradition. Here, it has been said, Plato outlines in advance the grammar school of the Middle Ages:[3] we may add that he prophesies from afar the public school of to-day—for his schools are to be linked with gymnasia and playing-fields. Another innovation which he suggests is no less important. Athenian parents were free to send their children to school, or to keep them from school, as they would: Plato advocates a system of universal compulsory education; "children belong to the State even more than to their parents" (804 E). Again (and this is the most drastic of innovations), he would have girls educated equally with boys—not kept indoors, as they were at Athens, and trained into hot-house plants, but brought into the open air and the common life of the State. He does not, indeed, advocate coeducation ; but he definitely advocates the training of both sexes on parallel lines alike in gymnastics and music.

Primary Education in the Laws

The scheme of primary education proposed in the *Laws* begins with the cradle. Children should be carried in arms by nurses until

[1] Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, p. 81, quotes two passages—one from the *De Corona* (§ 315), in which Demosthenes seeks to insult Aeschines by the taunt, "*You* taught reading and writing: *I* went to school"; and another from Lucian (*Menippus vel Necyom.*, § 17), who speaks of "beggars compelled by poverty either to sell kippers, or else to teach the elements of reading and writing".

[2] The only requirement which Plato makes of the teacher is that he should learn and approve the discourses contained in the *Laws* (811 D).

[3] Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 311. Plato suggests three sets of schools and gymnasia in the centre of the city (parallel, one may imagine, to one another) and three sets of gymnasia and playing-fields suitable for riding and archery outside the city (804 B).

they are three years old. They will not grow straight if they are compelled to walk too soon; and unless they are carried about, and moved up and down ("as if they were always at sea"), they will neither thrive in body, and be able to digest their food (789 D), nor acquire that quiet disposition of temper, and freedom from fits and starts of fear, which soothing motion gives (791 A). It is a mark of the growing child to shout and to jump: the shouting and jumping should be gradually trained, by the use of time and tune, into singing and dancing (664 E-665 A). Meanwhile, during these first three years, children should be neither indulged nor 'hardened': the right condition is the middle state, where neither everything is done to please the child, nor unnecessary rigours are used (792 C-D). After the age of three, self-will shows itself, and punishment may begin: games, too, are necessary, but children of this age have a natural way of amusing themselves, and they find games for themselves wherever they congregate (793 E-794 A).[1] At this age children should be taken by their nurses to the village temples: the nurses should keep them in order while they play, and official matrons should keep the nurses in order, and maintain the proprieties generally.[2] At the age of six the sexes are separated: henceforth boys are to associate with boys, and girls with girls (794 C). Studies are now begun, but only in the shape of physical drill. Boys are to be taught riding, archery, and the use of the sling: girls are to learn the same exercises. Plato emphasises the military object of these exercises, and of gymnastics in general: 'games' are not to be pursued as an end in themselves, as but the means for the making of a better soldier and citizen.[3] This is one reason why girls are to be trained as much as boys: women, in Plato's State, as well as men, will one day fight for their country.

Secondary Education in the Laws

The period of physical drill and development lasts till the age of ten. Whether it is to be accompanied by any training in music Plato does not explain; but it is reasonable to suppose that singing and dancing would be joined with the other physical exercises which he mentions. At the age of ten begins what may perhaps be called the secondary stage of education.[4] Here the scene shifts from the

[1] The regulation of games which Plato proposes is apparently for children of an older growth.

[2] One may compare with this provision for the social intercourse of children Plato's suggestion of regular meeting-places for young men and maidens (*supra*, p. 328). In its way, again, it is the equivalent of the modern kindergarten.

[3] If Plato emphasises the military purpose of physical training that is not because he is a militarist (*cf. supra*, p. 300). He is anxious that gymnastics should have a purpose, and be limited and controlled by that purpose, instead of being pursued (as it tended to be in Greece) to an excessive degree for itself.

[4] The first stage, from six to ten, may be called primary, succeeding as it does to the kindergarten stage between the age of three and that of six. But though it may be called primary, we must remember that it does not include the three R's. Plato, like

child to the schoolboy—that "most unmanageable of all animals, who, just because he possesses (what other animals do not possess) a spring of thought, still turbid and unsettled, is full of wiles, full of sharpness, and very full of impertinence" (808 D). He needs firm bits and bridles—a tutor, or παιδαγωγός, to escort him to school and watch his behaviour; teachers and studies to chasten him, "as freemen are chastened"; and Plato would even assign to any citizen the right to correct him (and his tutor and teacher too), "as men correct slaves". He must be up and away to school by daybreak (most of us sleep too long, writes Plato, perhaps finding sleep less necessary in his old age): life is short, and a perfect, or even a satisfactory, education is a very long matter. This may seem strenuous, and likely to be unpopular with the 'most unmanageable of all animals'; but Plato's demands on the schoolboy are in practice not very heavy. He must study literature, and therefore learn to read and write: he must acquire some knowledge of the lyre: he must master 'calculations,' which include the elements of arithmetic and geometry, so far as they are required for war and in household management and civic affairs, and the rudiments of astronomy, so far as they are needed for the understanding of the calendar (809 D).

This stage of education thus embraces three subjects—literature; music; and elementary mathematics. The study of literature is to last for the three years from ten to thirteen: the study of music is to begin at thirteen and to last till sixteen: Plato does not explain the age at which the study of elementary mathematics is to begin, but it ends, like the study of music, at the age of sixteen. The study of literature includes learning to read and write—the latter need not, however, be pushed to any painful reach of perfection—and the getting by heart of the classics of Greek literature. Here, we are told, educational practice varies: some would set boys to learn by heart whole poets: others, again, select a chrestomathy (810 E-811 A). Plato inclines to the latter practice: the poets (as has already been urged in the *Republic*) have not said all things well, and if this is the case, much study of poetry is a danger to the young. But besides poetry there is also prose. This is a difficult matter. There are many dangerous writings in prose—the writings, one may guess, of the scientists and the Sophists: historians are never mentioned by Plato. Ever prepared to exalt the legislator, Plato finds a ready remedy for the difficulty. The discourses contained in the *Laws* are of an admirable tendency: no better pattern could be set before the minister of education; and it will be well, therefore, if teachers are required to learn and approve these discourses, and any of a similar

Aristotle afterwards, protracts the period of simple physical training much longer than we do. In the same way we have to remember that the secondary stage, from ten to sixteen, in some ways corresponds to our primary stage; it includes the three R's, with the addition of geometry, some astronomy, and music.

character, before they are admitted to the *jus docendi*, and if pupils, again, are required to learn them from their teachers (811 D-E). They will thus be trained in the laws themselves, as well as in the spirit of the *Laws*; and the way to that civic excellence which is the end of education will be patent and easy to tread.[1]

Music, so far as it enters into song and dance, has already been studied before the age of ten. At the age of thirteen begins the study of what may be called instrumental music. Plato does not explain whether boys (and girls) should be taught to play on the lyre, or only to learn its different notes, to tune it, and to follow the playing of others (812 D-E); but he is clear that the music they study should be simple, and should involve no complications, "when the strings give one set of notes, and the composer of the melody another". What he is most concerned to urge, whether he is dealing with songs or with instrumental music, is that all musical compositions shall be morally suitable (812 C). Musical compositions are imitations (*ὁμοιώματα*), and what they imitate is the states or affections (*παθήματα*) of the soul. Now any musical imitation of an affection of the soul acts in turn on the soul of the hearer, and suggests to, or "charms into," his soul a similar affection. If it be the copy of a noble affection of the soul, it challenges and invites the hearer to become like its own original, following, under the influence of the copy, to the acquisition of a true nobility (812 B).[2] Music has a special efficacy in inducing such a sympathetic affection of the soul, because it is the finest of all the imitative arts—because the copies it produces are nearest to the original, and present the original with the most living truth; and because, again, it gives the greatest pleasure, and associating pleasure most closely with the original it copies disposes us most to like and to copy that original. There is no greater organ of habituation than music: there is no influence more potent in attuning men's feelings to the spirit of the laws (659 D-E). But if it thus is the most live of all the currents of suggestion, it is most important that it should be controlled and made to convey the right suggestion. It must not be appraised by its æsthetic quality—that is to say, by the pleasure which it gives; for pleasure is only an incident or concomitant of its action—it must

[1] Freeman (*Schools of Hellas*, pp. 109, 212) notes that possibly the music-masters of Athens taught "the metrical version, set to music, of the Athenian laws, which was ascribed to Solon," and quotes from Plato's *Protagoras* (326 D) the statement that "when boys leave school, the city compels them to learn the laws". Plato is perhaps thinking of the preambles rather than the laws themselves; and some of these are noble writing.

[2] There are thus three stages or factors—(1) the original *πάθημα*: (2) the musical *ὁμοίωμα*; (3) the sympathetic *πάθημα* which this induces. The argument on music and its ethical character is expounded in Book II of the *Laws* (the "book of music," as Book X is the "book of theology"), especially in 667-8. The *Protagoras* (and, of course, the *Republic*) expresses a similar view of the effects of music (326 A-B). It may be added that Plato's theory of music, like much of his general theory of education, is adopted and adapted by Aristotle in the *Politics* (Book VIII).

be judged by the moral value of the original it copies and the moral effects which it therefore exercises. That is why the music to be taught in the State of the *Laws* must be such as a sound moral judgment approves (659 A); and it is for this reason that Plato would institute a body of judges over the age of fifty to judge the value of musical compositions, and would fix their types for ever according to the manner of Egypt.

When he begins to treat of mathematical studies in detail (817 E-822 B), Plato premises that they need not be rigorously pursued, except by a few—the young associates, as one may conjecture, of the nocturnal council. They must be pursued "so far as is necessary"; and this would appear, from what has been said before, to mean that they must be pursued so far as they are practically useful in war or for household management and civic affairs. But Plato—teacher of mathematics in the Academy, and prophet of number and its properties—could hardly be satisfied long with such a limitation. Egypt, he soon complains, puts Greece to shame. Egyptian children begin to learn mathematics as soon as they learn their ABC: they play "in numbers," and carry mathematics into their games: their teachers free them early from that ignorance of geometry, which seems to be a natural property of the human mind, but is as ridiculous as it is disgraceful. Compared with the Egyptians the Greeks hardly deserve the name of men: they have the stupidity of pigs (819 D). In geometry, for instance, they make the mistake of thinking that the three dimensions are always commensurable; they have no inkling of the problem of incommensurability. Here Plato seems to demand a degree of geometrical knowledge transcending the canon of practical utility; and he leaves that canon still further behind when he comes to treat of astronomy. He accuses the Greeks of libelling, in their ignorance, the great deities of Sun and Moon. They speak of them, and of other heavenly bodies, as planets or irregular wanderers: they fail to see that in spite of all their apparent irregularities they move in regular circular orbits (821 B: 822 A). To Plato, who believed that the regular orbits of the heavenly bodies proclaimed the existence of a directing mind, and proved the being of God, this was more than error, and more even than libel: it was blasphemy. True religion demands a study of true astronomy; and that study must be carried to the point where the student begins to see the "being and the operation of God". "If it is true that the heavenly bodies really move in circular orbits, and this can be proved, astronomy must be learned so far as is necessary to the understanding of this truth" (822 C). Thus in the issue Plato requires not only the knowledge of astronomy necessary for following the calendar, but also the knowledge necessary for grasping the basic truth of his religious creed.[1]

[1] This passage in the *Laws* (821 B-822 C) raised the interesting and vexed question whether Plato was a Copernican before Copernicus, and believed that the earth moved

During the period in which the studies of literature, music, and mathematics are being pursued, we must presume that the gymnastic training, which began at the age of six and occupied, along with singing and dancing, the years between six and ten, is being steadily continued. Boys and girls are serving, during the years of secondary education, in what we may almost call an officers training corps: they are learning archery and slinging: they are taught the drill both of light and of heavy infantry: they are practised in manœuvres, marches, and camps (813 D-E). All this, we are told, may be classified as gymnastics; and since gymnastics is an essential part of education, we may say that military training is an essential part of Plato's educational scheme. At the age of sixteen, except for those few who pursue the study of higher mathematics, education would seem to be completed: there is no indication, at any rate, of any further training. Yet it is not till the age of twenty-five that a young man may marry (772 E); and twenty-five is the earliest age at which a young man may begin to serve as an associate of the inspectors of the country in their peregrinations (760 C). Plato leaves a gap between the age of sixteen and that of twenty-five; and it is difficult to fill this gap, even if we assume that much of the system of military training may belong to this interval. It is particularly difficult to see why Plato fixes the age of the young associates of the rural inspectors as high as twenty-five. At Athens young men came of age (to the extent, at any rate, of being recognised as owners of property) at the age of eighteen; and for the next two years, under the name of Ephebi, they were put through a course of military training. We are dependent, for our knowledge of this training, on inscriptions and literary evidence belonging to the latter half of the fourth century, and posterior, therefore, to the age of Plato. We learn from this evidence that the Ephebi of each tribe, under the control of a disciplinary officer (σωφρονιστής), served for their first year on garrison duty in the neighbourhood of Athens, and acted during their second year, under the name of Peripoli, as a moving patrol in Attica and along the frontiers of Attica. During the two years' course the Ephebi of each tribe messed together: the disciplinary officer of each company received an allowance for each man under his command, and provided the necessary rations.[1] There are obvious analogies between this system and the system of peregrinations of the rural inspectors and their associates which Plato suggests in the

in a regular orbit round the sun. We are probably justified in holding that Plato believed in the motion of the earth: it is difficult to say whether he also believed that it moved round the sun. Aristarchus of Samos, in the next century, certainly held that view (*cf.* Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, pp. 347-8; and Ritter's *Commentary*, pp. 228-50).

[1] The institution of the Ephebi is described by Bury, *History of Greece*, pp. 826-8, and by Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*, c. VII. It is worth remarking that if Plato, in the *Republic*, first sketched the curriculum of a university, it is the Athenian Ephebate, and not the Platonic Academy, which actually "gives birth to the first University," when it passes from a military system into a system of university education (Freeman, *op. cit.*, p. 220).

Laws (760 B-763 C). On Plato's system each of the twelve tribes supplies a body of sixty young men as associates of the five rural inspectors of each tribe: the inspectors and their associates make a double patrol of the country in two successive years, staying for a month in each year in each of the tribal districts: they mess together, and wait on one another. The associates are under military discipline: leave of absence is difficult to obtain: absence without leave is a serious offence. The functions of the patrol are partly military, and partly civilian: they are to protect the frontiers by trenches and fortifications; to keep the roads in order, with a view to military requirements; to control the flow of water, and to devise proper methods of irrigation. The whole system is intended both to give the members of the patrol some knowledge of field service and of the military geography of their country, and to improve the face of the country itself by proper civil and military engineering. Its analogies with the Athenian system admit of different explanations. If the Athenian system, in the form which has been described, already existed in the days of Plato, he was copying that system in the *Laws*. If, on the other hand, that form only came into existence after his time, and if it represents an Athenian revival some time after the battle of Chæronea (338 B.C.), Athens was copying the system advocated by Plato, and one of his suggestions was realised in his own city within a few years of his death.[1]

The Athenian Ephebate passed ultimately into the University of Athens; but it would be difficult to describe the parallel institution in Plato's *Laws* as a system of university education. The *Laws* describes primary and secondary education: it stops short of the final stage. It is true that at the end of the *Laws*, as we have already had reason to notice, Plato speaks of the subject of education as "raised afresh by the argument". He has invented the nocturnal council: he has spoken of the studies which its members will need: it remains to give some account of those higher or university studies which will correspond to the programme of advanced studies set forth in the seventh book of the *Republic*. But the *Laws* was never finished, and that account was never given. We can only compare the two dialogues so far as they cover common ground, and so far as they are both concerned with the earlier stages of education. The *Laws* is much more detailed, and in many respects much more practical, than the *Republic*. Plato moves less in the domain of first principles: he has nothing to say of the Idea of the Good: he has much

[1] This is the view of Wilamowitz, *Staat und Gesellschaft*, p. 127: "After the disaster of Chæronea, with an obvious reference to Plato's *Laws*, Athens attempted to bring its youth under discipline by a strict course of two years' military service" (*cf.* also *Aristoteles und Athen*, I., pp. 191 *sqq.*). Bury adopts the same view. It is only fair to add that so far as Plato's own references go, they are to Sparta and not to Athens. He describes the rural inspectors and their associates as κρυπτοί (though, he adds, the name hardly matters—763 B); and this suggests the Spartan κρυπτοί who between the age of eighteen and twenty policed the country of Sparta and kept watch over the Helots (*cf. Laws*, 633 C).

to say of the actual child. He is interested in its physiology and its psychology: he traces its growth from the infant to the schoolboy, and from the schoolboy to the young man. He goes deeply into the essence of music: he is interested in mathematics not as a propædeutic to Ideas, but in its practical application and its bearing on human life: he expounds a detailed system of regular military training. He pays good heed to the administration of education; and nothing in the *Laws* is more striking, or perhaps more valuable, than his advocacy of the organised school, his belief in compulsory education, and his plea for the education of girls.

The treatment of education in the *Laws* illustrates—what indeed the treatment of many other subjects in the *Laws* also shows—the fund of practical wisdom, the knowledge of actual life, and the command of detail, which Plato in his old age possessed. The study of the *Laws* is generally neglected in our English Universities. From a literary point of view the neglect is natural. The argument wanders: the exposition is diffuse: the Greek is often obscure. Yet if we look to the substance, we find a mellow wisdom, which often goes beyond the glowing ardours of the *Republic;* and among all the sands there are constant oases. Passage upon passage of profound insight alternates with aridity—none, perhaps, more sublime than those which occur in the tenth book; and in some of them, if not in all, there is beauty as well as power.[1] Even the desert tracts are full of practical hints and suggestions; and those who have studied the *Laws* have seldom gone away empty-handed. Aristotle drew from it much of the substance of his *Politics*, and, most of all, the sketch of an ideal State and the theory of education contained in its last two books. The *Utopia* of More is based on the *Laws* as well as on the *Republic.* Many of the lessons which Rousseau essays to teach in the *Contrat Social* find their parallel, and probably their origin, in Plato's *Laws*.[2]

NOTE

The Debt of Aristotle to the Laws

The general debt which the writer of the *Politics* owes to the writer of the *Laws* must strike every reader of both. Aristotle, who was born about 384 B.C., and came to Athens as a student about 367, must have come under Plato's influence at the time of the composition of the *Laws*. The parallels between the *Politics* and the *Laws* are numerous. (1) Aristotle repeats Plato's conception of the sovereignty of law, and his description of rulers as "guardians of the law" and its "servants"

[1] A chrestomathy of Plato would include many of these passages—*e.g.* 875 (on law): 889-90 (on law and nature); 903-5 ("All the world's a scheme").

[2] The debt of More and of Rousseau to the *Laws* is discussed in the Appendix.

(*Politics*, III. 16, § 4 : 1287, a 21). (2) The famous passage in the *Politics* (I. 2, § 14-16 : 1253, a 25-39), in which Aristotle asserts that man without a State and its law is either a god or a beast, is singularly like a fine passage in the *Laws* (874 E-875 D : *cf.* 766 A), not only in thought but also in expression. It almost looks as if Aristotle was writing with the passage in the *Laws* before him. (3) In his description of the development of the State from the family, and of the patriarchal character of early States (*Politics*, I. 2, § 6-8 : 1252, b 16-27), Aristotle follows the same line as Plato in Book III of the *Laws* (680 B-E); and he makes the same quotation from Homer about the Cyclopes as Plato. (4) He repeats Plato's argument that war is for the sake of peace, and not (as it was made at Sparta) an end in itself (*cf. Politics*, VII. 2-3 with *Laws*, I. 626 A-630 C). (5) The emphasis laid by Aristotle on habituation, both in the *Ethics* and in the chapters of Book VII of the *Politics* which treat of education, finds its parallel in the second book of the *Laws* (653). (6) The theory of the mixed constitution, and the references to Sparta as a type of that constitution, are common to the *Politics* and the *Laws*. (7) Aristotle's views about the importance of agriculture, and about retail trade and interest, in the first book of the *Politics*, are almost identical with those enunciated by Plato at the end of Book VIII and the beginning of Book XI of the *Laws*. Similarly a suggestion made in the *Laws*, that, with a view to the prevention of στάσις, the rich should voluntarily share with the poor (v. 736 D-E), recurs in the *Politics* (VI. 5, § 10, 1320, b 7-11). (8) Finally, the parallels between Books VII and VIII of the *Politics*, in which Aristotle constructs his ideal State, and the corresponding passages of the *Laws*, are too numerous to be mentioned. It is curious, and suggestive, that when Aristotle depicts his best he should copy Plato's second best. I have collected over a dozen instances, which include the following : (*a*) the discussion of the question whether the ideal State should be near the sea (VII. 6) is based upon the parallel passage in the *Laws*, at the beginning of the fourth book ; (*b*) the provision that every citizen should have two lots, one near the city and one near the frontier (*Laws*, 745), while it is criticised in Book II of the *Politics* (10, § 15 : 1265, b 24-6), is adopted in Book VII (10, § 11 : 1330, a 14-18) ; (*c*) the description of the buildings and aspect of the city (VII. 12, § 2-3 : 1330, a 24-30) tallies with the *Laws* (778) ; but Aristotle mentions (VII. 11, § 8-11 : 1330, b 32-1331, a 10), and rejects, Plato's proposal to dispense with any walls (*Laws*, 778-779) ; (*d*) in speaking of the country Aristotle reproduces (VII. 12, § 8, 1331, b 15-16) Plato's proposal of "inspectors of the country" (ἀγρόνομοι) with guardhouses and common tables (*Laws*, 760-762) ; (*e*) the scheme of education in Book VII of the *Politics* is propounded with constant reference to the *Laws* ; and just as Plato defends compulsory education on the ground that children belong to the State rather than to their parents (804 D), so Aristotle argues for common public education on the ground that no citizen belongs to himself, for all belong to the State (VIII. 1, § 3-4 ; 1337, a 21-29) ; (*f*) finally—a striking instance—just as Plato (934-935) proceeds, after legislating against abusive language (κακηγορία), to discuss the advisability of admitting comedy into his State, so Aristotle, after making provisions against αἰσχρολογία, proceeds to treat of comedy (VII. 17, § 8-11 : 1330, b 2-23).

The conclusion which follows is that while Aristotle, in the beginning of Book II of the *Politics*, criticises both the *Republic* and the *Laws* (the former in greater, the latter in less detail), he was really much more interested in the *Laws*; and while he was largely indebted to the *Laws* for his general theory of politics, he was under the greatest debt to the *Laws* in his picture of an ideal State. If Aristotle wrote the *Politics*, and arranged the content under the categories and in the scheme of his own philosophy, Plato supplied a great part of the content. There is as little absolutely new in the *Politics* as there is in (let us say) Magna Carta. Neither is meant to be new: both are meant to codify previous development.

APPENDIX

THE LATER HISTORY OF PLATO'S POLITICAL THEORY

§ 1. FOR a thousand years, the *Republic* has no history: for a thousand years it simply disappeared. From the days of Proclus, the Neo-Platonist of the fifth century, almost until the days of Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, at the end of the fifteenth, the *Republic* was practically a lost book. It is said of Proclus that he used to assert, that "if it were in his power, he would withdraw from the knowledge of men, for the present, all ancient books except the *Timæus* and the Sacred Oracles".[1] His wish was fulfilled. What the Middle Ages knew of Plato came from a Latin translation of a large part of the *Timæus*, made by Chalcidius in the fourth century, and from the references in Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, and Macrobius, in Apuleius' *De Dogmate Platonis*, and in Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophi*, the great commonplace book on which so many generations drew.[2] Something of the *Republic* was contained in Cicero's *De Republica*. Along with the praise of the mixed constitution, which Cicero had borrowed from later Greek writers, the *De Republica* contains a translation of Plato's sketch of democracy, an imitation of his picture of tyranny, and, above all, in the *Somnium Scipionis*, an adaptation of the myth of Er, which greatly influenced later thought, and was the foundation of Petrarch's hopes of heaven.[3] St. Augustine, though he had but little acquaintance with Greek literature, quotes largely from the *De Republica* in his own *De Civitate Dei* (a picture, like Plato's *Republic*, of a city in the heavens); and he helped in this way to preserve the Platonic tradition. The *De Consolatione Philosophi* of Boethius is as much inspired by Platonism as is the *De Civitate Dei* by what may be called Hebraism; but, though Boethius quotes the *Republic* occasionally, and especially the text "on kings becoming philosophers or philosophers kings,"[4] the theme of his book comes from the *Timæus*. And, partly because it was the one treatise of Plato which they possessed, partly because it was "something craggy to break their minds upon," the thinkers of the Middle Ages continued to cling to the *Timæus*. The legend of Atlantis became a great "matter," and Bacon's *New Atlantis* is a relic of its influence.[5]

[1] Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 366-7.

[2] John the Scot knew Greek, and quotes the *Timæus* in Latin which is not borrowed from Chalcidius; while Henry Aristippus, the deacon of Catana, translated the *Meno* and the *Phædo* in the Norman kingdom of Sicily.

[3] Burckhardt, *The Renaissance in Italy*, p. 546.

[4] I., c. IV.

[5] The legend of Atlantis is mentioned in the *Timæus* (24 E-25 D). The fuller account, of course, comes in the *Critias*.

During the thousand years in which the *Republic* slept, its influence was not dead. The Realists who believed in *universalia* which were *realia ante rem*, if they drew directly from the *Timæus*, were also unconsciously indebted to the *Republic*. And there was still more of Plato alive in the Middle Ages than his Ideas. "Great part of the educational furniture of the Middle Ages . . . may be found already in the *Republic* of Plato. The Four Cardinal Virtues of popular doctrine in the Middle Ages, familiar in preaching and allegory, are according to the division and arrangement adopted by Plato. . . . It might be fanciful to derive the three estates —*oratores, bellatores, laboratores*—from the *Republic*, though nowhere in history are the functions of the three Platonic orders of the Sages, the Warriors, and the Commons more clearly understood than in the mediæval theory of the Estates as it is expounded, for example, in the book of *Piers Plowman*. There is no doubt, however, about the origin of the mediæval classification of the Liberal Arts. The *Quadrivium* is drawn out in the *Republic* in the description of the studies of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music, though Plato does not allow the mediæval classification of Dialectic as a Trivial Art along with Grammar and Rhetoric. Furthermore, the vision of Er the Pamphylian is ancestor . . . to the mediæval records of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise."[1]

The analogies between Platonic doctrine and mediæval theory and practice go still deeper. The communism of the *Republic* had not only its parallel in the communism of the monastic system, under which a farming class of villeins paid part of their produce for the common consumption of monks who protected them by their prayers: it was part of the doctrine of the Church, and affected the canonical theory of property. By nature, Gratian taught, all things are common to all men; and though, since the Fall, the law of nature has had to yield place to positive law, and positive law recognises private property, as a necessary concession and remedy to the sinful passion of greed entailed by the Fall, it still remains true that no man should take more property than he needs, and that all men have only a title to possession so long as they make a right use of what they possess. To prove that communism is ideal Gratian not only refers to the practice of the primitive Church in Jerusalem: he also cites Plato. "Hence it is that in Plato that State is said to be ordered most justly, in which each member is ignorant of any private affections": "it was one of the wisest of the Greeks who said that the goods of friends should be in common".[2] A still deeper affinity between Plato's theory and mediæval life is to be found in the analogy between the whole ideal State of the *Republic* and the mediæval Church. Alike in organisation and in function the two touch and blend. If Plato organised the State of the *Republic* in three classes, and set the highest class of philosopher-kings to control the rest, the mediæval Church organised her members in the three classes of *clerici, regulares*, and *laici*, and she set the clergy, and especially the Pope as the head and fountain of all clerical power. to con-

[1] W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, pp. 26-7.

[2] See Carlyle, *Mediæval Political Theory in the West*, II. pp. 136-7. In a previous note (p. 210 n. 1) I have sought to suggest the affinity which may be traced between the programme of the *Republic* and that of Gregory VII.

trol the other classes.[1] If Plato required his philosopher-kings to control every reach of life in the light of the ideal principle of the Good, the mediæval Church set herself equally to control, in the light of Christian principle, each and every activity of her members—war and international relations; industry and commerce; literature and study. Last, and deepest perhaps of all the *testimonia animae naturaliter Platonicae* which the Middle Ages furnish, are the analogies, to which reference has already been made, between the polity of the *Laws*, in the development on which it enters at the end of the dialogue, and the general mediæval polity. It was said above[2] that the end of the *Laws* is the beginning of the Middle Ages. When we remember the religious doctrines, and the religious persecution, of the tenth book; when we remember the nocturnal council conversing with heretics in the house of reformation for the salvation of their souls, we may see that the saying is not without justification. And yet, even while we remember these analogies, we must remember another thing. They are spontaneous analogies. The Middle Ages were not following Plato: they were following their own way. That way coincided, at many points, with the way Plato had trodden before; but the coincidence was accidental. The only direct effects of Plato in the Middle Ages are those which flowed from the study of the *Timæus*, from the tradition of his view of the nature of Universals, and, it may perhaps be added, from the Platonic element in Augustinian theology.[3] The curriculum of the mediæval University may correspond to the curriculum of the seventh book of the *Republic*; but it was the curriculum of the mediæval University not because it corresponded with the curriculum of the *Republic*, but because it had been for centuries the actual staple of education.

§ 2. With the Renaissance came a new birth of the *Republic*. The Platonism of the Florentine Academy and the circle which gathered round Lorenzo de Medici was indeed Neo-Platonic; but in the little farm at Montevecchio Ficino had completed by 1477 his translation of Plato's writings into Latin. It is, however, in the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More that we seem to find the Plato of the *Republic* redivivus.[4] The *Utopia* has many references to the *Republic*; and, what is more, it advocates community of property and the emancipation of women. But whatever stimulus its author may have owed to the *Republic*, the *Utopia* is a different and independent treatise.[5] While in Plato there is no little asceticism, in More there is something of hedonism; while Plato had taught that society should let its useless members die, More suggests that those

[1] This division crosses the common mediæval division into clergy, baronage, and commons. It makes two classes of clergy and only one of laity: the common division makes one of clergy and two of laity.

[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 352.

[3] It lies outside my province to speak of the Platonic strain which, through St. Augustine, entered into mediæval theology, and which, leading always to a conception of God as acting according to law, was always opposed to the theory, championed by the later Nominalists, of an inscrutable God acting in inscrutable ways.

[4] *Plato Redivivus* is the title of an unplatonic work by Henry Neville (a pamphleteer who had been Parliamentarian and Royalist by turns) in the reign of Charles II

[5] I am indebted to the edition of *Utopia* by Michels and Ziegler, Berlin, 180[illegible] *leitung*, pp. 16-35).

who are too old or too sick to get pleasure or profit from life should commit suicide. Penetrated by a different spirit from that of Plato, while borrowing, as he does, Platonic details, More is a typical representative of an age in which, "in opposition to Christian monasticism men lived like Epicurean philosophers, and in opposition to Christian scholasticism thought like disciples of Plato". When we turn to More's advocacy of communism, we come upon the same difference from Plato which appears in his general outlook on life. The idea of communism may have come from Plato; its motives and its scheme are altogether different. The motives of Plato, as we have seen, are not economic, but political or rather moral: communism is necessary for the realisation of justice, and because it alone will secure an unselfish and efficient government. The motives of More *are* economic: his communism is in direct reaction against contemporary economic conditions. Plato had felt that ignorant and selfish politicians were the ruin of the Greek city; More felt (as a Lord Chancellor said at the end of the fifteenth century) that "this realm falleth into decay from enclosures and the letting down of tenantries". He saw the agricultural class evicted from its holdings to make room for sheep pastures: he saw "sheep devouring men". He saw great landowners monopolising the land, and men who would have been contented farmers betaking themselves to vagabondage and theft. Agricultural communism was being advocated among the German peasantry by the movement called the *Bundschuh*; and to agricultural communism More turned. Since private property means such lack of 'commodious living' for the mass of Englishmen, and since palliatives like equalisation of property and inalienable lots are of no avail, let us go the whole way, to the final goal of common property.

More's motives are thus economic: they are motives suggested more by the evils of his own times, than by the reading of Plato. His scheme is altogether different from that of Plato. Plato's communism had only touched the two upper classes: More's communism touches every member of the State.[1] Plato's communism had been arranged in such a way as to set the two upper classes free from all material work and material cares: More's communism is so planned, that every man must put his hand to the plough, and labour at husbandry. Plato's guardians were to share in common an annual rent in kind paid by the *tiers état*: More's citizens share in common the whole of the products of their country. Plato left the third class with private ownership of all property, and the guardians with common ownership of nothing except their barracks and

[1] More speaks, in the first book of *Utopia*, as if Plato had advocated general communism: he 'holds with Plato, and nothing marvels that he would make no laws for them that refused those laws whereby *all* men should have and enjoy equal portions of wealth and commodities, which is not possible to be observed where every man's goods are proper and peculiar to himself'. But he is not referring here to the *Republic*, but to an ancient tradition about Plato (to which Rousseau also refers in the *Contrat Social*, II. 8), that he refused to legislate for Arcadia and Thebes—that is to say, for the city of Megalopolis founded in Arcadia by Epaminondas of Thebes—because they would not consent to equality of rights (*Diogenes Laertius*, III. 17). Natorp, however, arguing that Plato's principles logically involved full communism, and not "half" communism (*supra*, p. 214), believes that More drew the logical conclusion from the principles of the *Republic* (*Plato's Staat und die Idee der Sozialpädagogik*, pp. 24, 33).

their annual rent: More leaves his citizens with no private ownership, and common ownership of everything.[1] Of all these differences, the one which is cardinal is the difference in the attitude of the two thinkers to labour. Plato meant his communism—a communism consistent with private ownership of most things, and involving common ownership of very few things—to set his guardians free *from* labour: More meant his communism, which was real communism in all things, to set all men free *for* labour. In place of unemployed farmers tramping the English roads, he would have work for all: in place of the many drones who live in rich men's houses, he would have all men bees. In this way he hoped to shorten the hours of labour, and to give all men a six hours' day.

It is obvious that More has many affinities with the modern socialism from which Plato so greatly differs. There are, indeed, differences between More and modern socialism. Modern socialism is generally collectivist, and advocates common ownership of the means of production: it is common ownership of products which More advocates. Modern socialism would not 'purify' society of its 'luxury'; it would only divide that luxury equally and impartially. More comes nearer to Plato in this respect; he would simplify economic life down to the elements of agriculture and a few necessary trades. But on the whole More has the spirit of modern socialism—something of its zeal for a fairer distribution of this world's goods; something of its close touch with actual contemporary economic conditions. And the problem of education is treated by him in the same realistic spirit. Education had been to Plato the head and forefront of his scheme: communism had been, in comparison, secondary and subordinate. Communism is first and foremost in More, and education is considered chiefly on its technical side, and as meaning a training in some trade; for every citizen of Utopia must practise a trade as well as agriculture, and alternate regularly between the two—a suggestion which shows yet again More's modern and unplatonic view of labour.

In his attitude towards woman More is, in some respects, very like Plato. He believes in the emancipation of women: he believes that women are able to do the same work as men. As in the *Republic*, the women of Utopia bear offices: as in the *Republic*, they go to war. But it is not all who fight; and it is only the priestly offices which women can hold. Nor is there any community of wives: More believes in monogamy. There is something of Plato's physical point of view in the suggestion that bride and bridegroom should see one another nude before marriage, in order that they may know that they are fitted for matrimony; but that is the only approach towards Plato's attitude to the sexual question.[2] There is no attempt to regulate population, except by the system of colonies.

[1] There is *no* gold in Utopia: in the *Republic* it is the guardians *alone* who have no gold.

[2] This suggestion is copied from the *Laws* (772 A). The *Utopia* not only follows the *Republic*, but also the *Laws*. When More went into the details of his ideal State, he naturally turned to the *Laws*, with its wealth of detail. Like Plato in the *Laws*, he advocates a system of common meals for all the citizens, men and women (II, c. v.): like him, he seeks to associate the old and the young together (*ibidem*). Like the citizens of the *Laws*, those of *Utopia* are very expert and cunning in the course of the

It would thus appear that More, on the whole, is Platonic in the letter, and not in the spirit. He is rather "the father of modern Utopian socialism," than an imitator of Plato's communism. His aim is equality of enjoyment for all: it was the aim of Plato to secure perfection of knowledge for the few. In Plato intellectualism leads to the philosopher-king and the rule of the all-wise Cæsar: More smiles at the idea of what the King of France would say to his Utopia.[1] There is nothing of the ascetic despotism of the Idea in More: his motto is rather, "Let cheerfulness abound with industry".[2]

§ 3. It is with Rousseau that Plato's political theory begins to exercise that steady influence on thought which it has exercised ever since. Rousseau was born, and lived in his youth, at Geneva. The Republic of Geneva, to whose "magnificent, honoured, and sovereign lords" he dedicated his "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality," was itself something of a city-state; and while he was a boy in Geneva Rousseau was busy reading in Plutarch the history of the city-states of antiquity, to which he constantly refers in his writings. In his later years he began the study of Plato; and Plato became a dominant influence in his thought.[3] By the help of Plato he liberated himself from the individualist theory of Locke,[4] and arrived at the collectivist theory of the State expounded in

stars and the moving of the heavenly spheres (II, c. VI.). The Utopians keep themselves isolated: when they travel, they have to obtain the license of their prince (II, c. VI.: *cf. Laws*, XII.). More, unlike Plato, professes religious tolerance: he says of King Utopus, *Quod credendum putaret, liberum cuique reliquit*: the Utopians, he writes, follow in their king's steps, and believe that *ipsa per se veri vis* will issue and come to light. But he is like Plato when he makes disbelief in the immortality of the soul, or in the providence of God, or in divine justice on sinners, punishable with death, and when he speaks of the unbeliever as forbidden to converse except with priests and men of gravity (II, c. IX.).

[1] More definitely alludes, in his first book, to Plato's philosopher-king. It is idle for philosophers to advise kings, as Plato found at Syracuse; the only remedy is a king who himself turns to philosophy: Plato was right in his simile about the philosopher, when he spoke of him as keeping indoors from the rain (a free rendering of *Republic*, 496 D).

[2] Campanella's *Civitas Solis* is a copy of More's *Utopia*, "inspired," a French writer says, "at once by the memory of Plato's *Republic* and the spectacle of Catholic convents". At the head of the city of the Sun is the Metaphysician: under him are three magistracies—Power, for war; Love, for eugenics; and Wisdom, for science, art and education. Campanella would abolish not only property, but also the family; hence the need of a magistracy of Love. A Dominican friar, he advocates a system of confession to the authorities, by which they are kept informed of all that the citizens are thinking and doing. This has its parallel in the *Laws* (*supra*, p. 342).

[3] Rousseau had read, as his references show, the *Republic*, the *Laws*, and the *Politicus*. In a work which he projected, but never wrote, there was to be a chapter entitled *Examen de la République de Platon* (Vaughan, *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, I. 339 E). He was influenced by Plato not only in his political, but also in his æsthetic and educational writings. His *Imitation théatrale* is said by Vaughan to be drawn from the third (this should be the second) book of the *Laws* and the third and tenth books of the *Republic*. In his *Émile* (Vaughan, *op. cit.*, II. 146) he writes: "Voulez-vous prendre une idée de l'éducation publique, lisez la *République* de Platon . . . c'est le plus beau traité d'éducation qu'on ait jamais fait".

[4] Partially—but he never quite escaped. It is one of the fascinations of the *Contrat Social* that it shows Rousseau struggling through an individualistic terminology, and with occasional lapses into real individualism, to a theory of collective social control.

the *Contrat Social.* The title of his great work is really a misnomer: it might be called, with more propriety, *De l'organisme Social.* He speaks in the common and conventional vocabulary of contract, but his argument has none of its individualistic connotation.[1] The State in his view is a moral organism (être moral et collectif: personne morale), with a sovereign general will directed to its well-being It is not a legal association, for the protection of legal rights: it is a moral association, through whose common life man enters into his moral being. Apart from his membership of the State, man is a stupid and limited animal, moved by appetite and instinct: by his membership he becomes an intelligent being and a man (I. 8: *cf. Laws,* 875). The State substitutes justice for instinct and law for appetite: it gives to men's actions the morality they lacked before. This is pure Platonism, or Hellenism; and Rousseau, thus imbued with the Hellenic view of the State as a collective moral society, was naturally led to propound the Platonic and Hellenic view of its educational character. It must realise moral liberty for its members, by releasing them from the bondage of appetite: it must force men to be free (I. 7). "Its education must give their minds the national type, and so direct their opinions and their tastes, that they are patriots by inclination, by passion, and by necessity" (*Gouvernement de Pologne,* c. IV.). With these principles as his fixed stars, Rousseau felt like Plato, and like Plato felt only too strongly, the zeal of the State. The State, as he conceived it, differed indeed from the State of Plato's conception. It was a State in which every citizen had a voice in determining the general will, and a share in making the laws through which, and through which alone, the general will can speak. Rousseau preached democracy—democracy pure and primary; and he preached the sovereignty of law. These were Greek tenets: they are hardly the tenets of Plato, who believed that the will of the State was the will of its wisest members, and that its wisest members should not be bound by legal chains. But the democratic and legal State of Rousseau is no less urgent in its control of its members than the aristocratic and absolutist State of Plato. Rousseau would prefer that his citizen should have no other society than the State: "It is important, for the proper attainment of the enunciation of the general will, that there should be no partial society in the State, and that each citizen should only think in terms of the State" (*Contrat Social,* II. 3). The sovereignty of the community over its members is inalienable, indivisible, and only limited by the fact that it must always be expressed in general rules of law. The community can lay down a civil profession of faith, whose articles contain if not dogmas of religion, at any rate those sentiments of sociability which are necessary to good citizenship and loyal allegiance: it can punish the disbeliever ("not because he is irreligious, but because

[1] The old tradition that Rousseau was an individualist, who said that "man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains," and preached a return to the "State of Nature," seems to depend on a reading of the *Contrat Social* which goes no further than the first sentence of the first chapter. Rousseau was an epigrammatist; and he has paid a heavy penalty for beginning his work with an epigram. If he had immediately added a second epigram, and if he had continued, "But it is just and proper that he should be in chains, if only the chains are just and proper; and government is self-justified, if only it is self-government," he would have saved unwary readers from a pitfall, and himself from the penalty of misconstruction.

he is unsociable "—but it punishes none the less); finally, if any man, after having confessed the faith, behaves as if he did not believe in its articles, the State can inflict death on the man "who has lied in the face of the laws".[1]

These are the fundamental lessons which Rousseau learned from the Greeks and from Plato. But he borrowed in smaller things as well as in great; and his political theory is not only Platonic in its general conception, but also in some of its details. The legislator who appears on the scene in the second book of the *Contrat Social* (c. 7) is a Platonic figure. *On veut toujours son bien, mais on ne le voit pas toujours*: the community always wishes to enunciate a general will—by which Rousseau means a will directed to the general well-being—but it does not always know what it should actually will. The difficulty will be acute in the beginnings of the State; and the *deus ex machina* whom Rousseau provides for its solution is the legislator. He will advise the community without imposing his advice as law: he will remedy its ignorance without abrogating its sovereignty. As Rousseau borrowed the figure of the legislator, so too, though perhaps unconsciously, he borrowed from Plato the conception which he forms of the size of the State. That size must be a mean: the State must be neither too large to be well governed, nor too small to be self sufficing (II. 9). He is Platonic again—his very words might be the words of Plato—in his attitude to maritime commerce. "Have you a large and commodious sea-coast? Then cover the sea with vessels: cultivate commerce and navigation: you will have an existence which is brilliant—and short" (II. 11).

Rousseau is not the last apostle of the social contract, but the first prophet of the Idealist school—not the successor and disciple of Locke, but the precursor and teacher of Hegel. Hegel (like Kant) started from Rousseau's conception of the State as the organ of moral liberty; but he was also influenced directly, and in a still larger degree than Rousseau himself, by the history and philosophy of the Greek city-state. This is most apparent in the *System of Ethics* of 1802; but the influence is almost equally present in the *Philosophy of Mind* of 1817. Hegel refuses to envisage the State in terms of law, or as a legal institution: he discusses it in terms of social ethics (*Sittlichkeit*), and as the highest expression and organ of that social morality, at once precipitated in and enforced by social opinion, which controls the life of all groups, and pre-eminently and particularly the life of the State. The connection between this conception of the State as the organ of social morality, and Plato's conception of the State as the organ of justice, is patent. Both conceptions depend on the postulate that the State is a moral organism—an organised system of life by discharging his duty in which each citizen attains a full righteousness; and both conceptions thus issue in the same rule of life—"to fulfil my station and its duties". Like Plato, Hegel was an absolutist, and though he hardly ventured to suggest the turning of Prussian kings into philosophers, he found the mainspring of government in "the will of

[1] The parallel between this passage and the tenth book of the *Laws* has already been noticed (*supra*, p. 366).

a decreeing individual". Just as Plato criticised Athenian democracy on the ground that it created two States in one, so Hegel criticised the English system of representative government, because it sacrificed the unity of the State to the play of private and particular interests. Hegel had none of Plato's belief in communism; but it was part of his theory that "civil society," with all its economic interests, must be brought under the control of the State, and if he was not a socialist, he was (what some may call next best, and others, again, next worst) a protectionist, who held that private interest, blindly engrossed on selfish ends, required public supervision.[1]

One of the Platonists of the nineteenth century—perhaps a Platonist *malgré lui*—was Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism. Like Plato, Comte believed that society could and should be governed by scientific knowledge; unlike Plato, he believed that such knowledge should be entirely free from metaphysical or theological assumptions, and that it should be purely positive and coldly inductive in character. Like Plato, again, he was a believer in mathematics; but unlike Plato, who believed in mathematics because they were the avenue to pure Ideas, he believed that the use of mathematical methods would of itself elicit the principles of social life. Sociology, or the study of Society, was to him a study of 'social physics,' in its two aspects of 'social statics' and 'social dynamics'; and it issued in laws as positive as the laws of physics—laws to which action should conform in much the same way as motion conforms to the laws of physics.[2] It followed upon these principles that government was a scientific problem, and administration a matter of scientific paternalism. Differing, therefore, from Plato in his rejection of all metaphysical principles, and refusing to accept any but positive principles drawn by induction from the past and the present, Comte was nevertheless a Platonist in his belief in the reconstruction of the State, and the guidance of that reconstructed State, by the light of scientific principles. Somewhat like Plato, again, though influenced by the mediæval church more than by Plato, he drew a distinction between the spiritual and the temporal power, the spiritual and the temporal class. His ideal State would have been one in which the spiritual class, "a combination of *savans* orthodox in science," expressive of reason and acting by persuasion rather than by force, guided the course of affairs in the light of scientific principles. In his youth he had been in close association with St. Simon (a mediævalist if also a Utopian), and it was from St. Simon —rather than from Plato—that he drew his conviction that the goal of philosophy must be social and its work a regeneration of society; while it was also to St. Simon that he was directly indebted for his distinction

[1] See W. Wallace, *Lectures and Essays*, on the relation of Hegel to Socialism, p. 441. In modern Germany it is Plato's theory of communism which seems to attract most attention; and more than one scholar (*e.g.* Pöhlmann and in a less degree Natorp) has claimed Plato for the Socialist camp.

[2] Comte would have had Sociology investigate the recorded facts of history, and bring them within the sphere of regular scientific law by referring each to the series of its antecedents and eliciting each from the conditions inherent in its own particular stage of social existence. The problem of Sociology thus became, as Mill put it, "to find the laws according to which any State of society produces the State which succeeds it and takes its place".

between the spiritual and the temporal power. His analogies with Plato are spontaneous rather than derivative; and in his objection to metaphysical principles, and his demand for positive 'laws,' he is fundamentally anti-Platonic. Formally more akin to Plato than the Hegelians, he is really far further removed from the spirit of Plato.

The philosophy of Plato has been, in the last forty years, one of the chief inspirations of a school of English political thought—the school represented, in different ways, by Green and Bradley and Bosanquet.[1] Perhaps it is under the influence of teachers trained in this school that Plato has found a new circle of disciples. You may come across English working men to-day, if you talk with students from the tutorial classes in our towns, who have read and learned to love the *Republic.* Plato, perhaps, would have been incredulous that such things could be: "it is impossible for the masses to be philosophical" (*Republic*, 494 A). If he could have foreseen such things, he might have been willing to entertain some little hope of democracy; he might have consented to widen the scope of his scheme of education, and the range of his scheme of communism, so that all, and not only a chosen few, might share in the love and the search for that wisdom, which he himself loved, and sought, through all his life.

[1] I may refer to the volume in the Home University Library on *Political Thought from Spencer to To-day* for some account of Platonic influence and parallels in recent English political thought, not only among professed philosophers, but also among men of letters such as Ruskin and Carlyle.

INDEX

Numbers in bolder type indicate the principal reference.

B

C

K

L

M